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SAVED AMERICA



photograph by Andrea Pistolesi / Tips / Axiom



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Smithsonian

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La Dolce Via

Stretching just three short blocks, the charming Via Margutta gets our vote for the world's best little street—beloved by artists, movie directors and *Roman Holiday* buffs

BY JEFF MACGREGOR

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KALEY MCKEAN (DETAIL)


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MRC 513, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012, (202) 633-6090
SUBSCRIPTIONS: (800) 766-2149
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY **Peter James Field**

Joshua Levine

The Paris-based freelance journalist initially thought he had the Marquis de Lafayette figured out—the all-around good guy, friend of liberty and ally of America (p. 58). Only later did Levine find Lafayette to be "much more interesting than the cardboard icon I had in my head," he says. "I was surprised to learn how consciously and conspicuously Lafayette was used by America." Levine also spent a week on board the replica ship *l'Hermione,* which he describes as "exquisitely beautiful." He has written for *Forbes* and the *Financial Times,* and is the author of *The Rise and Fall of the House of Barneys.*

Jamie Malanowski

The author got reinterested in the Civil War after his kids went through middle school and high school and he saw what simplified versions of the war were being taught. "I realized that most Americans get very broad and limited exposure to the war. I want people to open themselves up to the huge variety of experience that made up this great event." Commemorating the war's end 150 years ago, Malanowski draws on his extensive knowledge to select less-visited but significant historical places worth visiting (p. 64). Malanowski was the lead writer for the award-winning *New York Times* Disunion series and the author of *Commander Will Cushing: Daredevil Hero of the Civil War,* about the victorious but little-known Union Navy officer.

Stéphane Compoint

For three years, the award-winning photographer has been traveling back and forth between his home in Paris and the Chauvet Cave project more than 400 miles away in southern France, to photograph the construction of the replica for an upcoming book. Using only ambient light to shoot his images of the cave (p. 72), Compoint intends his photos to capture the "multidisciplinary adventure of building a replica of this dimension."



James Whitlow Delano

The Tokyo-based photographer first traveled to Lijiang, China, in 1997, but when he recently returned to photograph sites celebrated by the ancient travel writer Xu Xiake (p. 40), Delano was shocked by how commercialized the area had become: "Although the structures are well preserved, the culture is being challenged. I wanted my pictures to show the passage of time, but also do credit to the place it was."

Michelle Nijhuis

In 2012, the writer won the AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Award for her *Smithsonian* story about a mysterious epidemic of a fatal disease in bats in the United States. For this issue, she revisits the flying mammals for a different reason: their surprisingly sophisticated use of sound to jam sonar systems of rival bats (p. 18). "There's a very complex social world happening out there in the dark that we are just starting to understand."

Jeff MacGregor

"The challenge to me is to convey the sensation of the story, not just information, to make it breathe," says the *Smithsonian* correspondent about the Via Margutta in Italy (p. 30). "It's easy to inventory the facts of a place. I want readers to feel like they've walked the street, too." MacGregor, the author of the acclaimed book *Sunday Money,* about Nascar racing, also wrote about the Astrodome in Houston (p. 11), which he calls the "concrete incarnation of American optimism."



Romy Blümel

Though the main challenge of drawing the Marquis de Lafayette is the wide inconsistency in previous illustrations of the 18th-century aristocrat (p. 58), Blümel says that also meant she was "free to visualize the character." As for *l'Hermione,* the ship Lafayette sailed on, she based her renderings on photographs of the new vessel—and tattoos of classic ships. Her artwork has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Telegraph* and the *International Herald Tribune*.



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Discussion

Great articles about the assassination of President Lincoln in @SmithsonianMag! Love that magazine.

@canuckinthepast ON TWITTER

FROM THE EDITORS *Readers hailed the cover package commemorating the 150 year anniversary of Lincoln's assassination. "Over-the-top wonderful," James Edlund of Minnesota wrote. Jerry Adler's story "Wild at Heart," about a former SeaWorld trainer who worked with orcas, is sparking heated debate. Paul Massignani argues that the theme park should be closed permanently, but Zoe Remund doesn't go that far. "SeaWorld doesn't need to shut down, just change," she says on Facebook. "It's unethical to keep such intelligent creatures in a tank." But the largest reader response was generated by David Roberts' skeptical "Grand Canyon on the Edge," which reported on a proposed commercial development, including a gondola, on tribal land adjacent to the national park.*



Grand Canyon Elites

Thank you for your enlightening article about possible developments at the Grand Canyon. Though the author is clearly against development, the article highlights the very real conflict between environmentalists and those advocating economic progress for the Navajo and increased access to the canyon. The proposed Escalade project is located outside the far northeastern boundary of the Grand Canyon National Park and 23 miles from the South Rim's Grand Canyon Village. Its 420 acres is insignificant compared with the 1,902 square miles of the national park. The interior of the Grand Canyon is a magical place that should be accessible to all, not just the elite who have the mobility, stamina, time and money to travel to the bottom of the canyon by walking or riding a raft or a mule. The proposed gondola would have a minor impact on the beauty of the canyon. Consider, do the hundreds of railroads, tramways, and ski lifts in the Swiss Alps spoil their beauty?

Robert Arias
CROWNSVILLE, MARYLAND

Absorbing the spectacular beauty of Bill Hatcher's photographs of the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers, and the floor of the Grand Canyon, I tried imagining a flyover of the area after the proposed Escalade commercial development. While I thought David Roberts was quite fair in giving both sides of the issue, I came away thinking that, surely, there must be other creative ways to introduce industry with jobs potential without desecrating such an iconically important natural area. If I should have the opportunity to view in person the wonders of the Grand Canyon, I am certain I would want to see them in their natural state, without all the human embroidery of such vast and forever-changing commercial development.

Kay J. Mann
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Ditto

In his otherwise excellent article about the changes wrought by the advent of the copier and 3-D printers ["Duplication Nation"], Clive Thompson makes a common mistake, confusing mimeograph machines with ditto machines. The mimeograph worked by forcing ink through a wax-impregnated paper stencil, while ditto was a transfer process, using alcohol to release small amounts of ink (usually purple) from a paper master. These were good for 25 to 75 copies (if you were lucky) and were smelly. A good mimeographer could obtain hundreds of copies from each stencil.

John Trimble
MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA

Weighty Question

James L. Swanson ["The Blood Relics"] wrote, "Booth fired a one-ounce lead ball." A .44-caliber pistol typically uses a ball weighing 140 grains, or 0.32 ounces. Was that an error or is something else going on?

George Idzorek
LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The plaque beneath Booth's Deringer at the Ford's Theatre Museum lists the weight of the bullet as "nearly an ounce." The National Museum of Health and Medicine, where the bullet is displayed today, says it has no record of its weight and it cannot be weighed now because it has been permanently mounted. Bullets in the 1860s were not uniform. A firearms expert at the National Museum of American History says 0.32 ounces is well within the realm of reason.*

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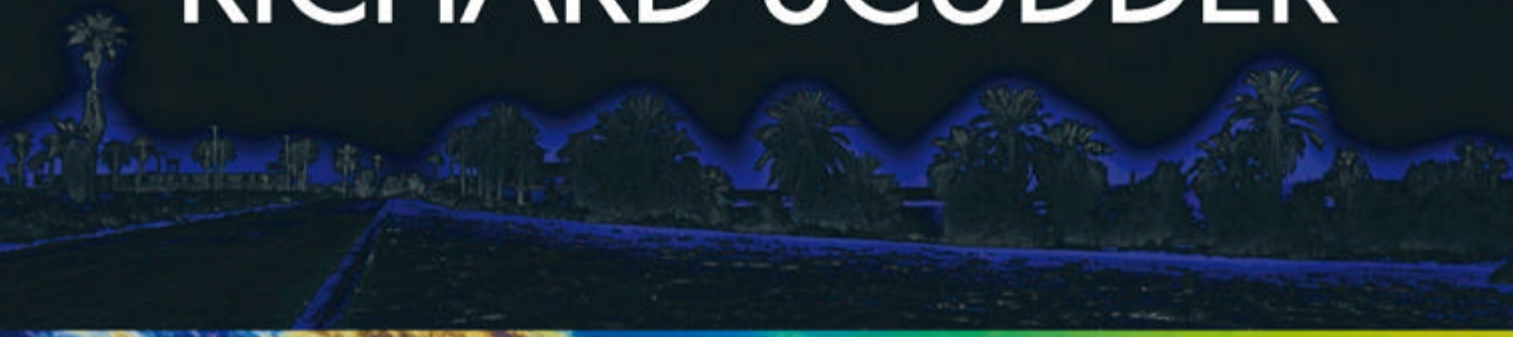
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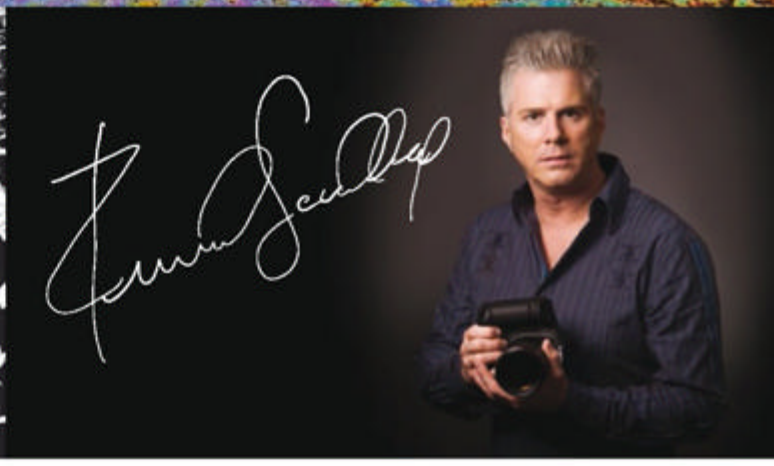
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Phenomena

A CURATED LOOK AT SCIENCE, HISTORY & CULTURE

Looking back at Houston's futuristic Astrodome

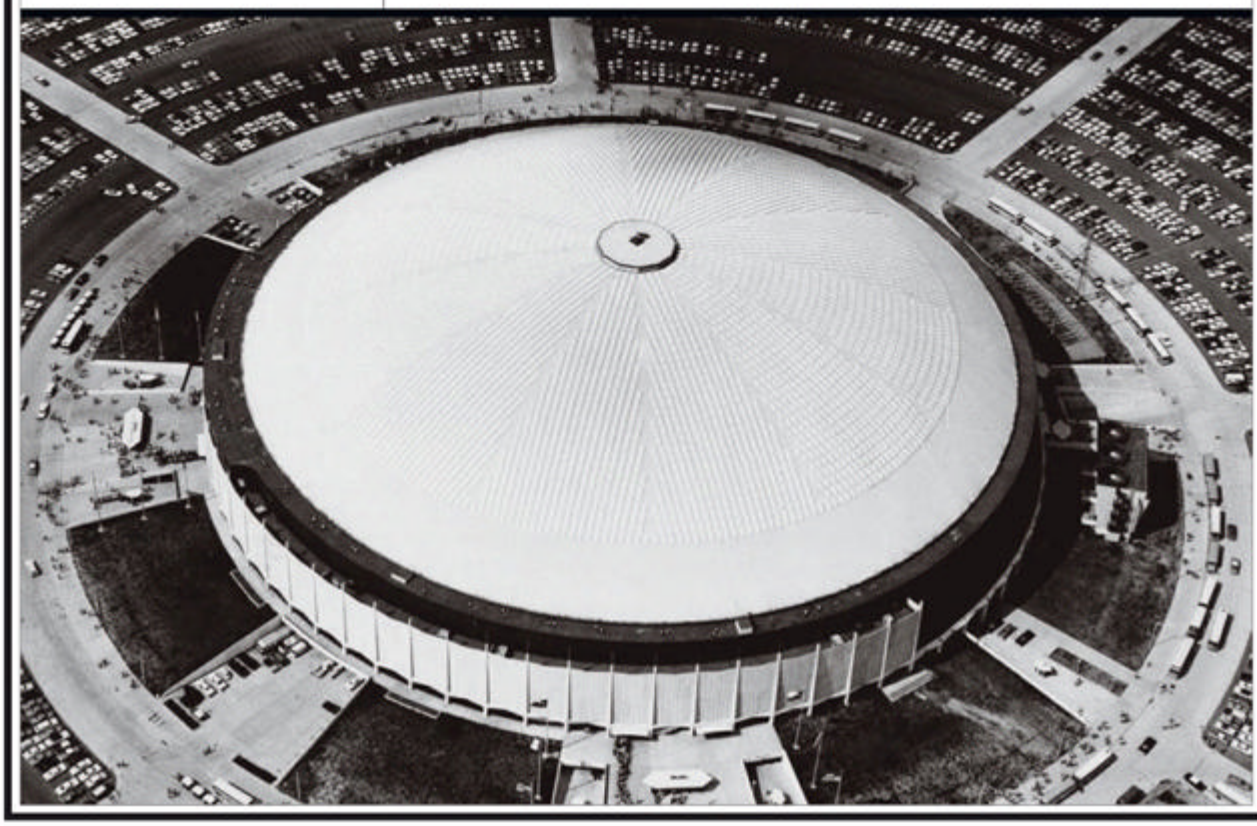
by Jeff MacGregor

AMERICAN ICON

Space Aged

It was the past's vision of the future. The greatest dome ever conceived, a climate-controlled wonderland of science and cutting-edge engineering, the biggest indoor space ever made by man, an immense decorated cylinder with a flying-saucer roofline. Half-a-mile around, it was as big as Houston's dream for itself, as big as the idea of Texas.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Houston Astrodome, one of many wonders once dubbed the Eighth Wonder of the World. Before *Star Wars* and "Star Trek," there were *Sputnik,* John Glenn and the Jetsons, back when every elementary school cafeteria was filled with metal lunchboxes painted with astronauts and rocket ships. Back when we all believed technology could save us.



Home of the first skybox and an animated scoreboard 150 yards wide.

AP IMAGES

The idea of a domed stadium wasn't new, but it took Judge Roy Hofheinz, a larger-than-life Houston booster, to make it happen. He sweet-talked and strong-armed the city fathers until in 1962 they found themselves—all Brylcreem and two-button suits, Stetsons and heavy shoes—breaking ground on the new home of football's Oilers and baseball's Colt 45s not with shovels but with six-guns.

When the building opened, three years later, the renamed Astros beat the Yankees in an exhibition game. It was April 9, 1965. Mickey Mantle hit major-league history's first indoor home run, but it was the building people talked about. It was everything they said it would be. But it was not then, and is not now, very beautiful.

It wasn't the curve and counter-curve of Googie-style coffee shops, of '50s spaceships and San Fernando car washes. Nor was it Eero Saarinen's lighter-than-air TWA terminal at JFK. Except for its scale, the Astrodome was a shape out of the past, a Colosseum on the bayou.

It was twice as large as any single enclosure ever built before. The immense greenhouse ceiling was a marvel, like the great train sheds of Victorian Europe—but once the Astros outfielders started losing fly balls in the glare, the transparent ceiling was painted over. Which meant the grass died, which meant "AstroTurf" had to be invented. A year later it was America's third most-visited man-made attraction after the Golden Gate Bridge and Mount Rushmore. Between innings the grounds crew wore spacesuits and helmets and cleaned the diamond with vacuums.

Elvis filled the place more than once. Everyone from Evel Knievel and Muhammad Ali to Billy Graham and the Supremes had their names on the marquee. Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King fought the "Battle of the Sexes" here in 1973 (women won), and Nolan Ryan threw one of his seven no-hitters under that unlikely ceiling. Refugees from Katrina washed up here in the hurricane summer of 2005. Like Ellis Island, and not without controversy, it briefly held, housed, then redistributed thousands of them.

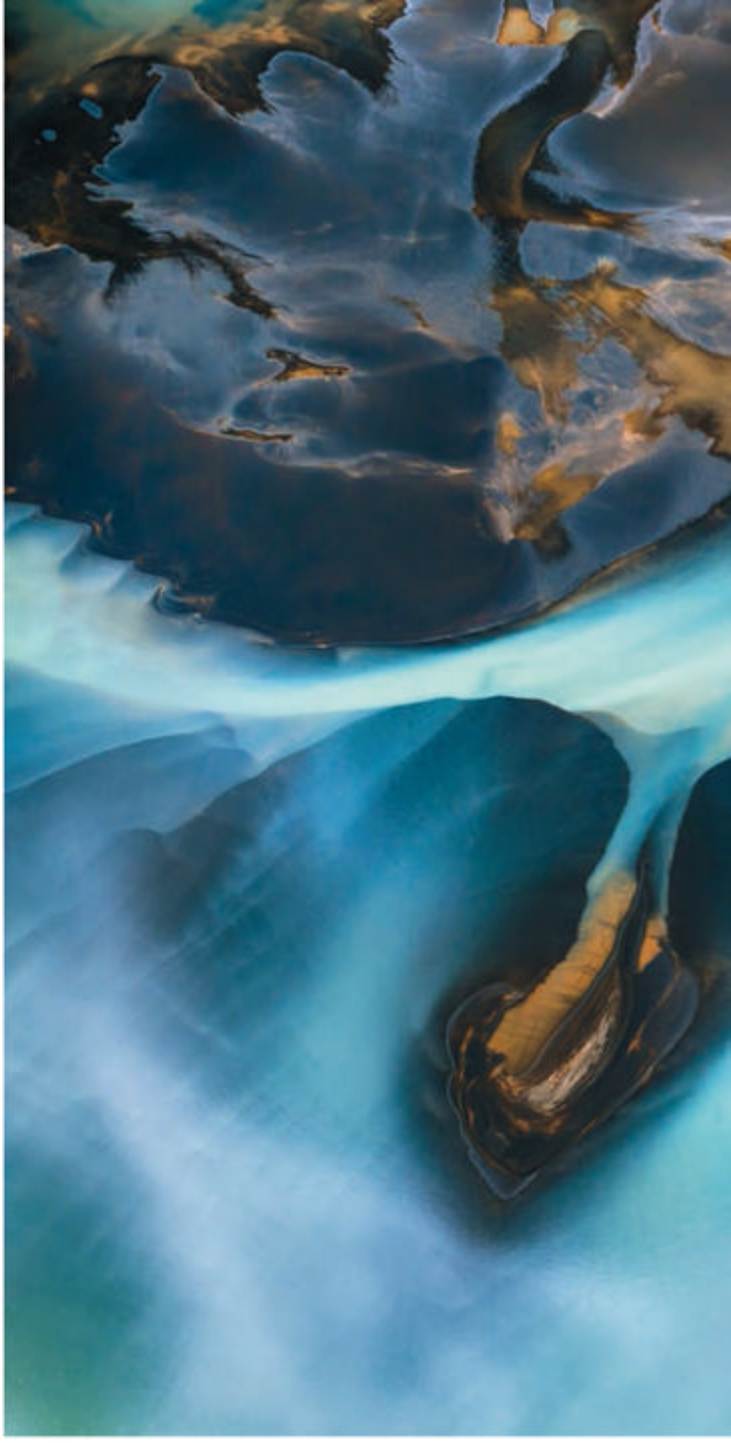
By then it was long since clear that the Astrodome was an anachronism. Its replacement since 2002, a gigantic pole barn now called NRG Stadium—get it?—was built beside it, so close that each subtracts from the other in a way every architecture student but no developer or politician understands.

Proposals float up, weightless, to repurpose the emptied Astrodome, reclaim its greatness. No one pulls the trigger. The Astrodome isn't saved—but somehow it isn't gone. It's the perfect avatar of its time, big enough to hold our space age optimism and allay our space age fears.

When the time comes, all you can do is abandon it.



DANIEL BELTRÁ



See Change

The terrible beauty of glaciers melting and oceans rising



The fluorescent, milky blue swirls in the photograph above might look like computer-generated imagery, but this is what **Daniel Beltrá** saw last July when he flew in an airplane 1,000 feet above Iceland's Olfusa River. The whitish streams in the otherwise crystalline waters are glacial sediment, traces of the 11 billion tons of ice vanishing from the island nation each year as a result of global warming. The Spanish-born Beltrá, who has also taken stunning aerial photographs of deforestation in the Amazon and of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, calls attention to ecological devastation by depicting the consequences in arresting works of art—but not just for art's sake. Which is why his perspective is so apt this month, with its Earth Day tribute. "I want viewers to take the time to understand what they are looking at," Beltrá says, "and have a conversation about human impact on nature." For Icelanders, that impact touches their very name. **–SABA NASEEM**

Back to the Future

A newly discovered work by the great video artist Nam June Paik suggests why the cutting edge is so revealing in hindsight

The Korean-born artist Nam June Paik shook up our understanding of TV and media with playful, strange video installations. In his 1969 work *TV Bra for Living Sculpture,* a cellist's garment included two miniature cathode ray tubes whose screens showed live images distorted by her playing of the instrument. The 1995 *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, a 15- by 40-foot "map" of glowing neon and 313 TV sets, helped cement his reputation as the "father of video art." So imagine art scholar Gregory Zinman's thrill when he discovered an unknown work—a cryptic early computer experiment found among seven truckloads of television sets, videotapes, toys, robots, birdcages, musical instruments, sculptures and some 55 linear feet of papers donated to the Smithsonian American Art Museum by Paik's estate after he died in 2006.

Etude 1 is a computer program Paik wrote that imprinted onto Thermofax paper an image resembling a four-leaf clover, with concentric circles composed of letters: on the right "G-O-D," on the left "D-O-G," up top "L-O-V-E" and at bottom "H-A-T-E." Zinman found the image along with a pencil-annotated printout of the Fortran computer code, both of which will be revealed for the first time in "Watch This! Revelations in Media Art," an exhibition of 44 works by artists spanning 72 years, opening April 24 at the museum.

Paik created *Etude 1* in 1967 after he contacted Bell Labs, the research and development offshoot of AT&T in New Jersey, which had been collaborating with artists like Robert Rauschenberg to make experimental artworks. Two Bell technicians who visited Paik's Manhattan studio found him using magnets to distort images on TV sets and invited him to the lab. In a letter, Paik described the project he embarked on there: "It is my ambition to compose the first computer-opera in music history."

We don't know what came of Paik's planned opera, but what remains is *Etude 1*, which may have served as a technical exercise, as its title suggests. But today it's more than a study: It's a telegram from a time when cutting-edge computer technology—Paik used a GE-600 series mainframe computer, big enough to fill a room—was capable of little more than producing an image that now feels like a hieroglyph. It reminds us that our own pioneering technologies will one day seem quaint and mysterious, too. –WENDY MOONAN

Images like the four-leaf clover (below) were designed using Fortran computer code and stored on punch cards.



NAM JUNE PAIK. "ETUDE." [LOVE/HATE/GOD/DOG]. (DETAIL). (1967–68). SAAM. SI. NAM JUNE PAIK ARCHIVE; GIFT TO THE NAM JUNE PAIK ARCHIVE FROM THE NAM JUNE PAIK ESTATE. © NAM JUNE PAIK ESTATE

ART HISTORY

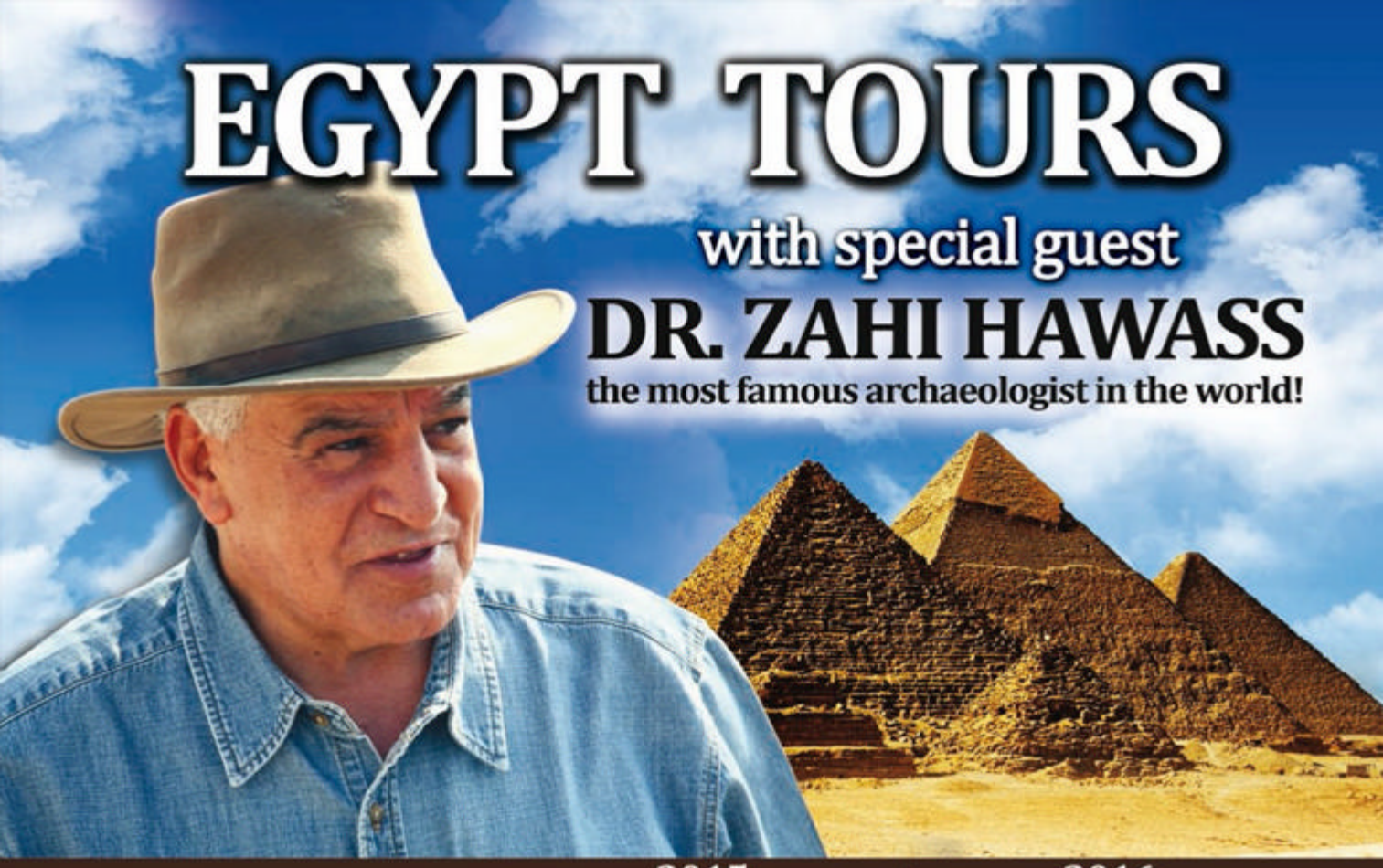


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SMALL TALK

Philip Glass

The famed American composer of operas and film scores has a new memoir, *Words Without Music*

Which artists should everybody listen to?

I might say John Coltrane—something from *Giant Steps*. And Ravi Shankar. And Béla Bartók. Maybe an American composer like Elliot Carter. And then a Bobby Dylan song, one from *Blonde on Blonde*. That's a good range. That's what I listen to.

Is music better experienced alone or with other people?

Something happens in the company of an audience, you hear music a little bit differently, and in a way it can be very exciting. I remember hearing the classical Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia at Carnegie Hall when I was 18 or 19. He came out and sat on the lip of the stage, by himself, without a microphone, just a guitar. I had the cheapest seat I could get, way up at the top, and I could hear every note he played. And the experience of that audience, focusing—there were maybe 2,500 people there—the *presence* of the audience was a powerful additive to the experience.

If not a composer, what would you be?

I might have been a performing musician, though I didn't like practicing. As a composer-performer I can get away with that. I don't have to play Chopin, I can play myself. If I wasn't playing my own compositions, would I be a pianist? It might be too much work!

Bat Signal

How hungry Mexican free-tails sabotage the competition

Known for their spectacular hunting sprees, when many thousands wing out of caves at twilight in search of insect prey, Mexican free-tailed bats now have a new claim to fame: Recent research shows that they are able to sabotage the sonar systems of rival bats trying to capture a meal.

Aaron Corcoran, a biologist currently at Wake Forest University, was studying the hunting habits of Mexican free-tailed bats in Arizona and New Mexico when his ultrasonic microphones picked up an unfamiliar sound. Bats use a variety of calls—most of them are inaudible to humans—for both navigation and communication, but the free-tailed bats sent this particular signal only when nearby bats were about to snag their prey.

So Corcoran and colleague William Conner, who studies animal communication, tethered live moths to a streetlight with lengths of fishing line and waited. When approaching bats emitted their characteristic "feeding buzz"—a rapid series of echolocation calls that bounce off a prey item and back to the bat—the researchers played recordings of the newly discovered call through loudspeakers. It dramatically reduced the bats' chances of capturing the moths, shrinking their hunting success rate from about 65 percent to 18 percent. The call, which spans multiple frequencies, overlaps with the feeding buzz, creating a blur of noise that "jams" the echolocation signal, much as military forces jam enemy radio communications.

To be sure, other bat species also have specialized vocalizations for keeping competitors away from food. A common bat in North America, known as the big brown bat, makes a series of chirps that appear to claim dibs on flying insect prey, and pipistrelles in Europe emit complex sounds to warn other bats away from a patch of rooftop or urban park, along with the food resources within.

But Mexican free-tails, which live in enormous colonies that can exceed a million individuals, are the only echolocating animal known to actually jam signals. Corcoran, who describes bats as "incredibly adorable," speculates that the adaptation evolved in response to the intense competition among members in the same crowded colony. "At some density," Corcoran says, "your friends become your enemies." –MICHELLE NIJHUIS









A large colony of Mexican free-tailed bats can consume an estimated 250 tons of insects in a single night. From their home roosts—popular sites include Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico and the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin, Texas—the bats are known to travel up to 150 miles for the feast, and to snatch flying prey more than a mile off the ground.

ADAPTATION



CAROLYN COLE / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; JOHN C. ABBOTT; ROLF NUSSBAUMER; JOEL SARTORE / NATIONAL GEOGRPHIC CREATIVE (2) (CAPTIVE)

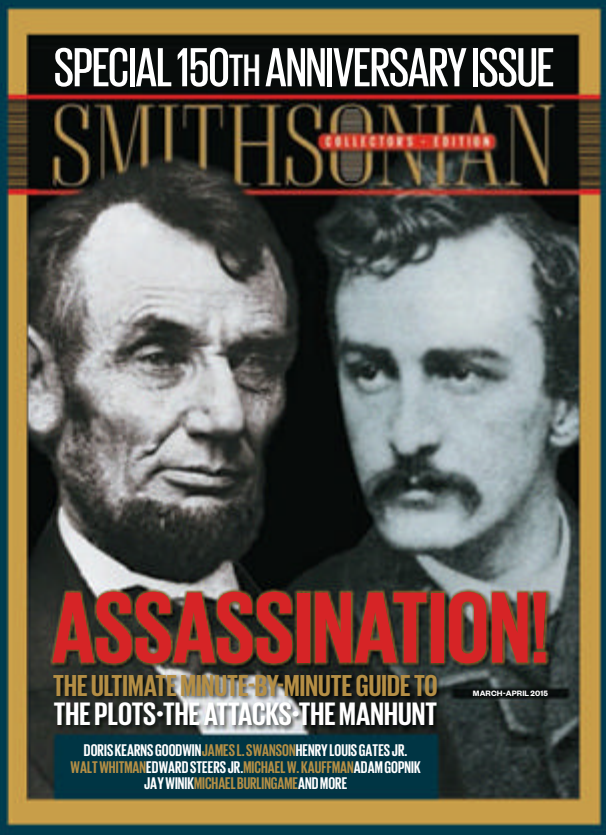
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Field Study

Can returning farmland to the wild help bumblebees in crisis?

ILLUSTRATION BY **Kaley McKean**



When I first saw the field on a damp October day, it didn't look like much—33 humdrum acres around a crumbling farmhouse in rural France, 50 miles south of the old Roman city of Poitiers. Previously a wheat field, it had been sown with grasses for grazing cattle. But I envisioned something spectacular and incredibly rare—a wild meadow seething, chirping and hopping with insect life, and, above all, a safe haven for the much beleaguered bumblebee.

I've spent 20 years studying bumblebees, those quintessential signs of summer and intellectual giants of the insect world. Sadly, their natural habitats are nearly gone, and some species in Europe, North America, even as far as Japan, are in rapid decline. Franklin's bumblebee, formerly found in Oregon and California, is almost certainly extinct. To a degree, the bumblebee crisis overlaps with another bee problem you've heard about—colony collapse disorder, the devastating disappearance of adult commercial honeybees. Recent studies suggest that insecticides known as neonicotinoids play a role in that problem, because they can disrupt navigation and make honeybees more susceptible to disease. It makes sense that wild bees, including bumblebees, are also harmed by these chemicals.

But we know for a fact that a big driver of the bumblebee decline has been the conversion of flower-rich grasslands to flower-free farm monocultures. Fragments of natural habitat that remain are often too small to support viable bee populations. Thus the French farmland, which I have been slowly reviving to wildness. It's a true field study, chronicled in *A Buzz in the Meadow*, out this month.

It's not easy restoring floral diversity on formerly arable land that has been enriched with fertilizers; the high soil fertility favors coarse grasses that out-compete the flowers. So a local farmer cuts the hay (and feeds it to his goats), which saps nutrients from the soil. As the grass weakens, flowers creep back, regenerating from the soil's seed bank, and from seeds blowing in on the wind or carried in by birds.

Just last year, I recorded my field's 100th new flower species, excluding those that I have sown. Every new arrival—from red clover to ladies bedstraw—supports new insects. I have dozens of butterfly, dragonfly, cricket, beetle and mantis species. From just a handful of bees, there are now 16 bumblebee species alone, including the rare short-haired bumblebee, plus honeybees and more than 50 other bee species.

These bees spill out from the meadow to pollinate the sunflowers in my neighbor's field, and fruits and vegetables in nearby gardens. Studies around the world confirm that crop yields are more reliable when there's a nearby patch of undisturbed habitat to act as a source of pollinators. It seems to me that if 10 percent of farmland, perhaps the least productive, were wild meadows instead, then we wouldn't have to worry about a lack of pollination.

Though we often focus our conservation attention on large, charismatic animals, our own survival is linked far more tightly to the fate of insects and their kin. We need hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds to eat pests; flies and dung beetles to recycle nutrients; worms and myriad other creatures to maintain our soils. And it's the bees that pollinate our crops, providing a global service worth more than $200 billion per year. I'm learning to look after the little creatures, to find more corners for them to thrive in, for it is they that make the world go around. -DAVE GOULSON

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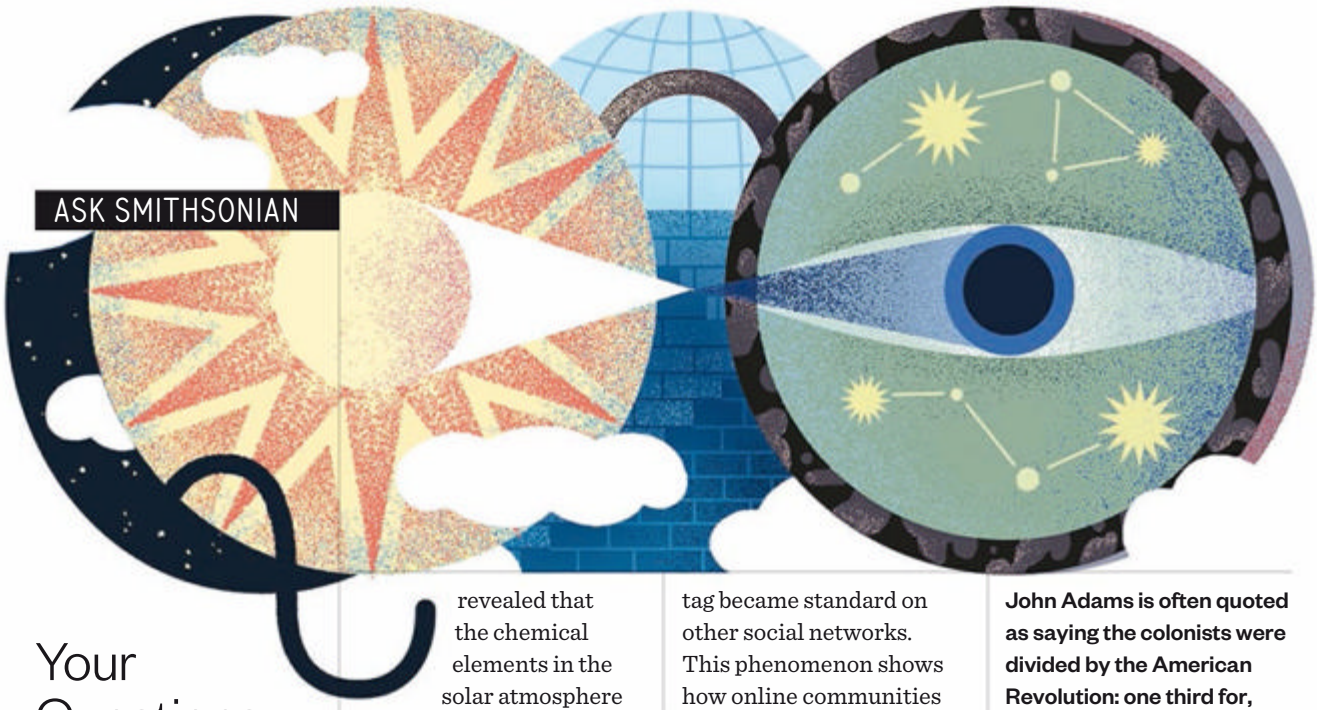



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Your Questions Answered by Our Experts

Who determined that the sun was a star, like the stars in the nighttime sky? Mike Curtiss, West Richland, Washington

No single astronomer had this realization. Prominent thinkers considered the possibility since classical antiquity; they had creative rhetorical argument on their side, but no proof. By the late 19th century, we knew what stars were, and we knew the distances from the earth to a few stars and to the sun; with that data, astronomers determined that these bodies released energy in roughly comparable amounts. Then spectroscopic examination revealed that the chemical elements in the solar atmosphere were just like those found in common yellow-colored stars spread across the sky. *David H. DeVorkin, senior curator, National Air and Space Museum*

Did Norsemen explore the west coast of Mexico? Dhani Schimizzi, Rochester, North Carolina

No; Vikings never got to the west coast of America. They probably didn't travel much farther west or south than the Gulf of St. Lawrence. *William Fitzhugh, anthropologist, National Museum of Natural History*

Who invented the hashtag? Gary Miller, Davenport, Florida

San Francisco technologist Chris Messina is usually credited with being the first to use the hash sign (#) as a tag on Twitter as early as 2007. After Twitter formally adopted it, the tag became standard on other social networks. This phenomenon shows how online communities develop their own languages, which spread and then evolve or wither over time. *Sebastian Chan, director, digital and emerging media, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum*

Do pumas and jaguars share habitats in Central or South America and compete for the same resources? Could the two species crossbreed? James DeWitt, Lakewood, Colorado

These two big cats overlap in many places, from the U.S.-Mexico border south. And where they overlap, they compete for resources. Jaguars (the larger of the two) tend to take the larger prey, pumas the smaller prey. Crossbreeding of most cat species can produce hybrids, but I know of no well-documented cases involving pumas and jaguars. *Kristofer M. Helgen, curator of mammals, National Museum of Natural History*

John Adams is often quoted as saying the colonists were divided by the American Revolution: one third for, one third against and one third on the fence. Is that correct? Tom Hansen, Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Roughly speaking, yes. It's difficult to be demographically precise about these things, but Adams was a shrewd judge of the political landscape. His assessment shows that the Revolution was by no means guaranteed to succeed. Most interesting are those who were on the fence, waiting to see who got the upper hand before deciding which side to join. *David Ward, senior historian, National Portrait Gallery*

ILLUSTRATION BY **Marina Muun**



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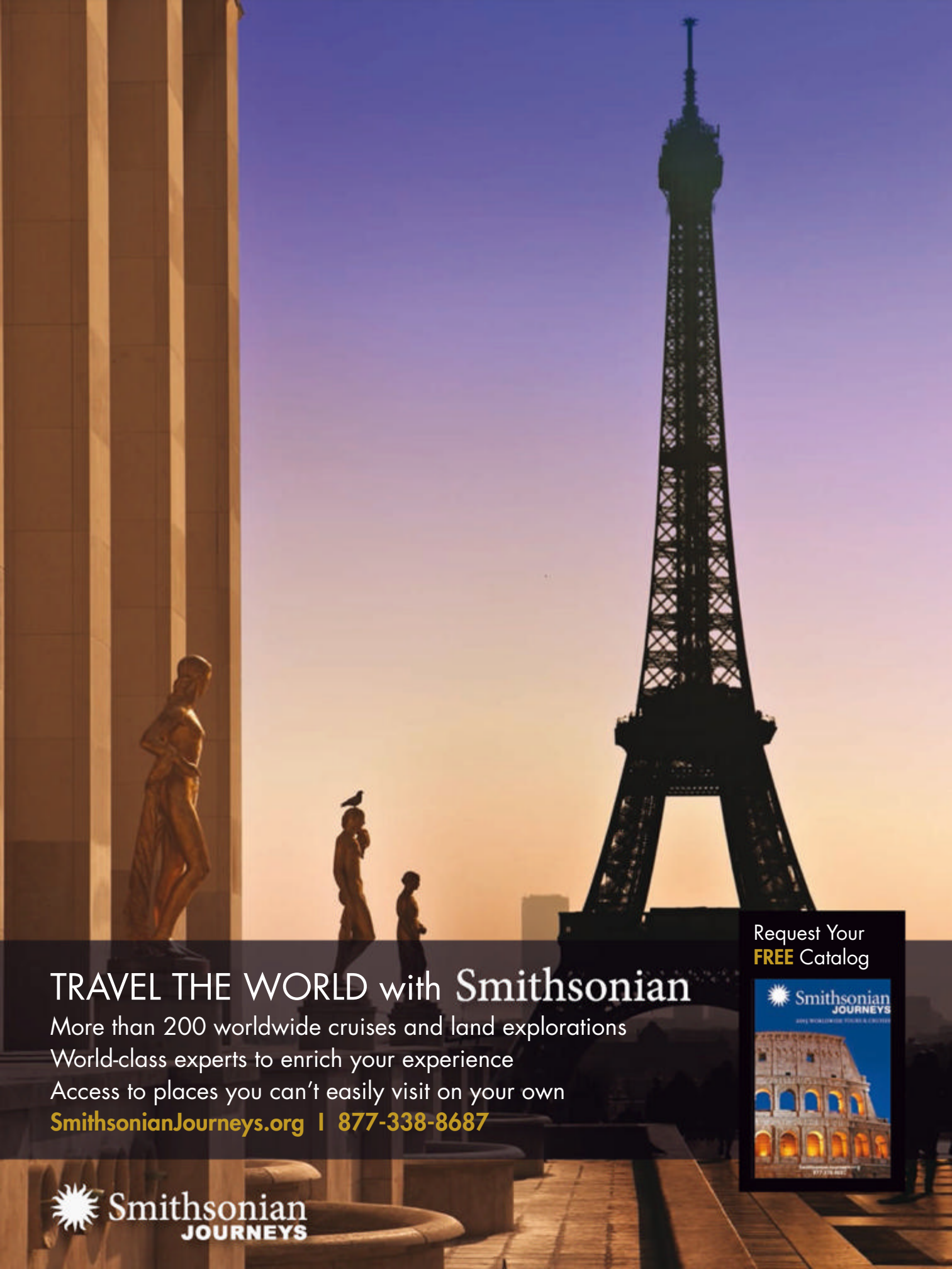
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LA DOLCE VIA

Taste the good life on our favorite street, once home to Fellini and since 1953 the scene of Americans' sweetest *Roman Holiday*

BY JEFF MACGREGOR • PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI


ENIGMA
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GIANNI BULGARI
MIU MIU

I PROBABLY SAW THE VIA MARGUTTA FOR THE FIRST TIME in 1965. I would have been 7 or 8 years old. I saw it on television. I was an unformed American boy in a formless American suburb and I saw Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn in the back of a cab on their way to Via Margutta, 51. I was watching *Roman Holiday* on the afternoon movie.

Rome to me in second grade was a daydream, an act of imagination, a confusion of clichés, of Peck and Hepburn and that apartment on the Margutta; it was the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain, marble and granite, ball gowns and bone-white stone, cypress and staircases and olive trees, an impossible history of gladiators and Caesars and Hollywood, scooters and the Spanish Steps, the Vatican and Castle Sant'Angelo, a hot bright sun and unrequited love. It still is.



In the 50 years since, having finally arrived in Rome, having walked Via Margutta a dozen times, I've fallen more widely and deeply in love with it, with its warmth and disorder and mystery, with its fictions and its truths, with the romance of its chaos and decay, with its citizens and its sadness, with its monumentality and indifference to worry, its films and its comic politics and its joyful failures. A city is what it does to you, and Rome defies any attempt by the tourist to describe it—while insisting in every moment that it be described.

Via Margutta is a short street with a long history, three blocks going back 2,000 years. What likely began as an open sewer for the villas and palaces that have come and gone on the Pincian Hill above it is now the most charming little street in Rome. The name likely comes from a sarcasm, an eye-rolling Latin euphemism—"sea drop"—for the foaming pool where the cloacal stream poured down from the backhouses of Rome's elite. The original buildings were probably stables.

Now it's an oasis of quiet set between the teeming Piazza di Spagna and the Piazza del Popolo, in the tourist center of the city below the parks and gardens of the Villa Borghese, the Piazza Bucarest and the Viale di Villa Medici. Mostly residential, lined with vining ivy and ocher stucco, cobblestones and window boxes, art galleries and artists' studios, it is one of the most beautiful streets anywhere.

Maybe that's why filmmakers dote on it so.

Roman Holiday is a love letter to love, and to Rome and to Hepburn and Peck. It launched America's postwar tourist business to Italy, and that courtyard apartment is so charming and famous that film buffs from all over the world seek it even today, more than 60 years later. But it's easy to miss, and when you find it, the door is almost always closed and locked. If you don't know the movie, the premise was simple: Joe Bradley, played by Gregory Peck, is an American newspaperman scheming for a story and candid photos of runaway princess Audrey Hepburn. They fall in love and he doesn't get the scoop.

A few years later Federico Fellini personified a variation of that tabloid cynicism in the character Paparazzo in his own film *La Dolce Vita*, which is the opposite of a love story.

Fellini lived at Via Margutta, 110. For decades he and his wife, actress Giulietta Masina, were fixtures in that colorful street. The marker is still at their apartment door. And the truth is, this, more than anything, accounts for my interest in their corner of Rome. I've been an avid fan for many years.

When not recreating the Via Veneto on Stage 5 at Cinecittà, or filming in the park across the Via Tuscolana from the studio, Fellini shot often in his own neighborhood. Once you know the streets around his home, you begin to recognize them in his movies. And in others. The maestro often drank his espresso around the corner at Bar Canova on the Piazza del Popolo by the twinned churches of Santa Maria—near the same spot he used in *Roma* and *La Dolce Vita*; and at which Woody Allen later filmed the scene where the newlywed wife loses her phone in *To Rome With Love*, his love letter to Roman love letters.

Masina and Fellini are gone now, but if you know where to look, and book the right hotel, you can still see the awnings and the shutters and the ornamental fruit trees on what used to be their terrace.

Theirs is the best-known house on the street.

But over the years Via Margutta has been a home to every kind of artist and craftsman, painter and sculptor, composer and poet. By the Middle Ages, it had become a lane of blacksmiths and carpenters and stonecutters. By the 18th and 19th centuries, painters were arriving here in earnest and the street was remade yet again.

LEFT: JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION / CORBIS; MAP: GUILBERT GATES







CIAO, MARGUTTA

Along the via's three blocks, Roman street life achieves a languorous charm all its own (clockwise from top left: a 21st-century Renaissance beauty at a gallery opening; lunch hour at the Osteria Margutta; gallery owner Enrico Todi, informally known as the mayor of Via Margutta; the workshop of stonecutter Sandro Fiorentini; facade of No. 110, once director Federico Fellini's home; a courtyard ornamented with statuary). When Truman Capote lived in a three-room penthouse apartment here during the 1950s, he captured an aura unchanged from that day to this. His balcony, he wrote, offered "a miniature scene tranquil and perfect as firelight: several Roman rooftops, faded orange, faded ocher, and a few across-the-way windows (behind which episodes of family life could be observed)."











Fellini based the characters who populated his films on ordinary Romans—observed from the director's favorite bar on the Piazza del Popolo.

A few doors up is the Goffi Carboni Antiquariato, a gallery and antiques shop with a half century in the street. Among the porcelains and landscapes, Giovanni Carboni will tell you that by the mid-1800s, painters came here from across Europe. Via Margutta was its own school of painting. "Fortuny, for example, came from Spain. Around 1858 he came to Rome to study Italian painting. It was an important school; this was the street of the painters."

The famous fountain at the far end of the street, the Fontana delle Arti, is capped by a carving of a bucket filled with artists' brushes. To this day, there's an annual painters' festival on the street.

Debussy, Liszt, Puccini and Wagner are all said to have lived on the Via Margutta. Stravinsky, too, who came here with his friend Pablo Picasso. Now oligarchs and well-heeled tourists do their drinking in the Stravinsky bar around the corner at the super-luxe Hotel de Russie, where the Picasso Suite rents for $3,200 a night. Cy Twombly and Salvatore Scarpitta, two of America's most important postwar modernists, both had studios here. Truman Capote lived at number 33 while writing director John Huston's *Beat the Devil*—in the same year William Wyler released *Roman Holiday*.

I asked another movie buff in an email not long ago what he thought of *Roman Holiday*, and he wrote back, "I love the film—its romance, its fairy-tale quality, the style it was made in, its great cast and director. I think it's a beautiful movie and I always loved it. I wanted to be a character in that film." The movie buff is director Francis Ford Coppola. I also asked him if he knew the Via Margutta. "Sure, the street of the painters," he wrote back. "Charming."

Woody Allen wound up on the Margutta mostly by chance, or at least by the design of his production team. "I didn't know Rome very well. It was really the art director who found all the beautiful locations that we had." Martin Scorsese's first film—storyboarded when he was 11—was to be set here, too. Instead, he shot *Gangs of New York* at Cinecittà studios 50 years later. Antonioni, Visconti, Bertolucci, Fellini, Coppola, Scorsese—it all begins in 1945 with Roberto Rossellini. As Jean-Luc Godard once said, "All roads lead to 'Rome, Open City.'" So every director from de Sica to Sorrentino has been through here with a camera.

Only four or five or six stories on each side, in every shade of earth, of terra cotta, from one end to the other the only thing I've seen of similar scale to rival the Via Margutta are the lesser red rock slot canyons and arroyos of Zion National Park. The warmth off the stone, the sandpaper feel of it under your fingertips, the narrow perfection of light and proportion and sky. *Azzurro. Rosso. Celeste.* The quiet. Early and late, without shoppers and tourists, improbably, it has that same quality of solitude, too.

Via Margutta is a handy antidote to the crush in the Sistine Chapel and at St. Peter's and the crowds at the Pantheon and the Forum and the Hippodrome and across the Capitoline. On its worst tourist days, Rome can feel like a wedding cake dropped on an anthill.

Being here can be stressful. It is the condition of most Americans, indeed most Westerners, to feel lately overworked and overscheduled. Our tense dissatisfaction is the near constant state not only of the modern citizen-consumer, but of modernity itself. We wear it in our expression and our step, and if you look up from your phone long enough to glimpse yourself in a plate glass window on the Via del Corso your first day in Rome, you'll see what I mean.

Then ride the subway, that living catacomb of beggars and the old women rattling their cups of folded newspaper, the homeless sleeping on the platforms; read about the riots, the joblessness, the poverty. Rome is every magnificence and all our squalor.

Yet I find Rome soothing, relaxing, not in spite of these truths, but because of them. Rome insists on my humanity, prompts me to say that while everything changes nothing changes, and



10 Small Streets That Live Large

BY MATT BLITZ

CAIRO, EGYPT
Tenth-century **El-Moez Street** boasts medieval architecture that's unparalleled in the Islamic world, like the Al-Azhar Mosque and the Bab Zuweila gate.

COLMAR, FRANCE
Canals, shops and rainbow-colored houses along **Grand Rue** will make you feel as if you fell into an Alsatian fairy tale.

GEORGE TOWN, PENANG, MALAYSIA
Vibrant murals adorn funky **Beach Street**, celebrated for food vendors. Slurp hokkien mee (prawn and egg broth) or ais kacang (shaved ice with red bean and grass jelly).

QUEBEC CITY, CANADA
Chockablock with shops, cafés and French architecture, **Rue du Petit Champlain** is the oldest road in a 17th-century district in the shadow of the Chateau Frontenac.

DELHI, INDIA
In one of Asia's largest jewelry markets, merchants sell precious wares on narrow **Dariba Kalan Road** in the old city's Chandni Chowk area, once known as "moonlit square."

DUBROVNIK, CROATIA
Twelfth-century **Placa Street** draws eaters, shoppers and sightseers, just blocks from the Adriatic Sea and close to stunning beaches.

HAVANA, CUBA
Calle Obispo (pictured above) comes alive at night with drinks, cigars and music. See the Taquechel Pharmacy Museum and Hemingway's digs at Hotel Ambos Mundos.

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS
In a neighborhood of canal-lined streets **Gasthuismolensteeg** may be the most happening, with boutiques, the city's best *broodjes* (sandwich) shop and the offbeat Museum of Spectacles.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
Between Broadway and Bowery, snug **Great Jones Street** packs in grunge bars, swank restaurants, a tony spa and history, from 19th-century gang brawls to '60s "jonesing."

OLINDA, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL
The **Rua Bispo Coutinho** wends through a Unesco World Heritage district past sidewalk vendors, galleries and a sacred art museum in a 17th-century Episcopal palace, all just blocks from the Atlantic.

See more of Rome with photographer Francesco Lastrucci at **Smithsonian.com/margutta**

LEFT: DIETMAR DENGER / LAIF / REDUX PICTURES



Margutta is also a trendy outpost where fashion designer Chiara Baschieri, third from left, recently opened a studio.

that what we know of human nature today is what we knew of human nature 2,000 years ago. It does away with my worries and my ambitions, because you and I are part of a continuum of vanity and appetite moving endlessly back and forward into nothingness.

For all its luminous past, Rome is a city of the unending present. Understanding its magic, its balm to disappointment, is much less important than experiencing it. Its promise of connection, of continuity. Fellow feeling. As if I've already lived through everything.

It's always like coming home.

This is the Eternal City not only for its literal persistence, but because in the right light, on the right street, on the right day, stepping into the long parade of its past, it can make me feel immortal. How slowly time moves, how rarely does my own reality intrude. In a city of the infinite present it is possible at last to forget everything—or remember it. Maybe that's why everyone's here. That, and the sunsets.

A city is the stories you tell about it. Love. Passion. Beauty. Memory. Too much to describe, too much to take in. Too much to eat, too much to drink. Too much everything. Rome is hard on its poets. In fact Keats died right around the corner, in that house at the foot of the Spanish Steps.

At this end of the Margutta in late afternoon, you'll recognize the Osteria Margutta by its antique blue window frames, by the smell of fresh bread and of garlic in oil, and from a sequence in that Woody Allen movie. Alison Pill and Flavio Parenti play a scene here at an outdoor table. (You'll never go wrong with the *carbonara*.) There's another scene with Alec Baldwin, just *there*, sitting a few hundred feet away. The movie is harmless, a postcard about a postcard from postcard Rome.

But Paolo Sorrentino's 2013 masterpiece, *La Grande Bellezza*, the great beauty, extends the Rome staked out by *La Dolce Vita*. It is very much about longing, loss and mourning a place even as you walk through it, mourning yourself and your past and your future, letting go of ambition and vanity. It is



the most stunning movie set in Rome in years. They shot a scene with Toni Servillo right around the corner.

What is it about Rome that so many directors across the decades love? Not only the scenery, but the fraternity, and the competition. According to Coppola, "That so many of those absolutely great Italian directors—more than you can count on all your fingers and toes—all worked there."

Out front, in the shops and restaurants on the Via del Babuino—baboon street—is where the real tourist action is, and where the spending happens. Back here it's all morning glories and wisteria and shell limestone door frames. The painted ceilings of the improbably small hotels. I walk it whenever I can, in rain or shade or under the fat lemon sun. Always the feel of a movie set, of dress extras in perfect suits walking perfect





***Roman Holiday* was filmed at No. 51. In that movie, Gregory Peck later recalled, Audrey Hepburn "made everybody in the world fall in love with her."**

dogs. Singles. Couples. Lost families with too much luggage. The bored. The resigned. The metronome of high heels on the cobbles. The overheard dialogue, the spats and reconciliations, all those musical vowels, the sweet nothings and the smell of gardenia and sandalwood corkscrewing out of the boutiques. The sound of water in that fountain.

Up the block, at 61A, there's been an overnight smash-and-grab robbery. The candy-cane police tape is incongruous across the front of the GB-Enigma jewelry store, a super-luxury outpost owned by a scion of the Bulgari family. Thieves have taken a sledgehammer to every display window and methodically emptied them. For now, you can still see the damage in the Google street-view images of the store. It is a rare thing when reality gets even a toehold here. Via Margutta is a fantasy, after all. Rome is a fantasy.

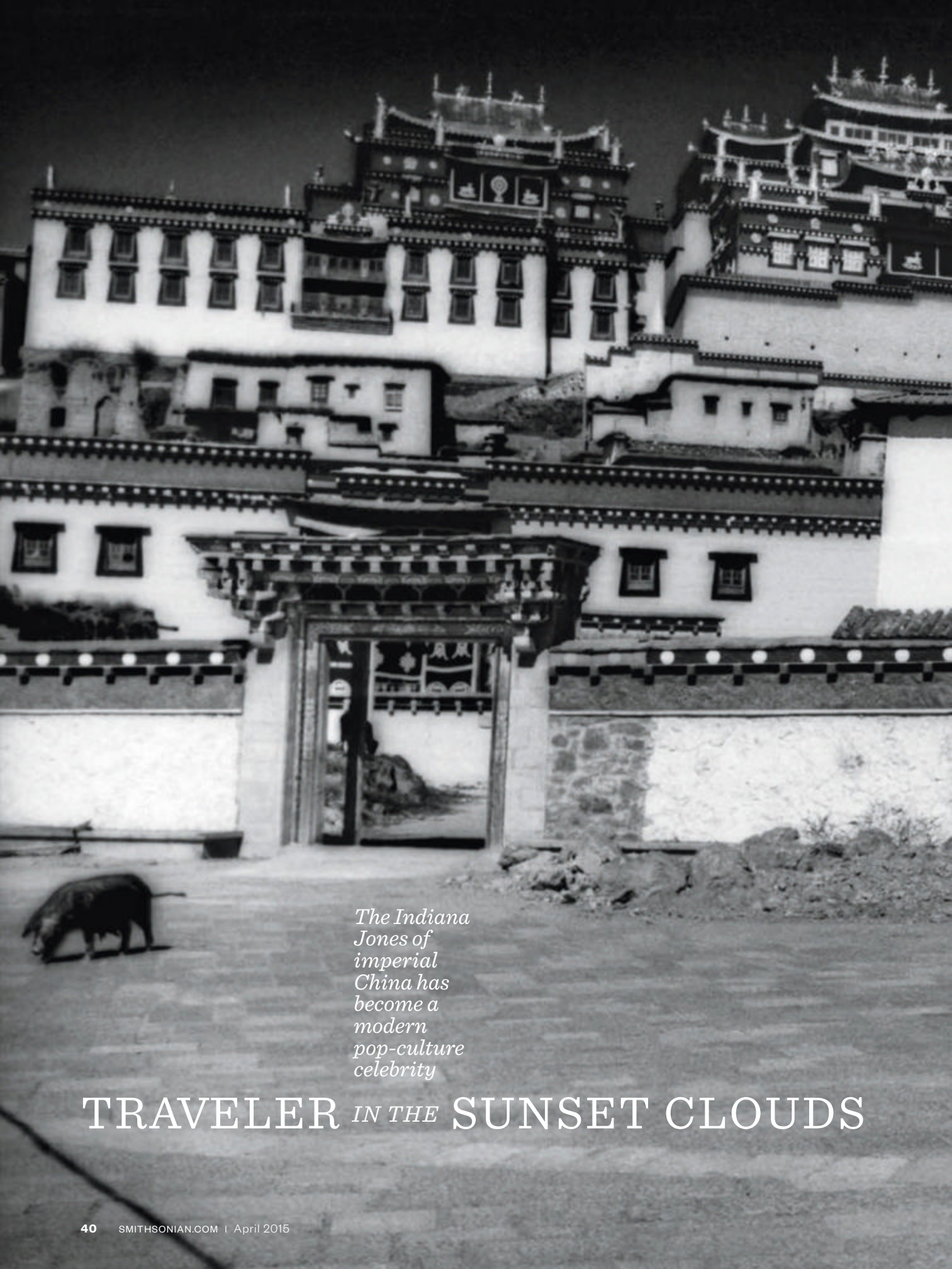
Near the end of my last visit, I found it, the Gregory Peck/Joe Bradley apartment at Via Margutta, 51. There's a gallery next door at 51A. If there's a man inside sitting behind his desk, approach him. You'll know him when you see him. You'll smile and he'll smile, and you'll point to the famous address, and before you can even ask the question in your broken Italian, he'll smile wider and say "*Vacanze Romane*?" You'll nod and smile and say "*Sì*." By then if you're very lucky he's fished the key from his pocket and you're saying "*Grazie*" again and again as he beckons you to the door. You'll hesitate a second, then walk right through. Everything is just as you pictured it. All these years later and here you are at last.

A groomed gravel courtyard ringed with apartments and artists' studios with windows two stories high. Cast iron gas lamps. Ornamental trees. Climbing ivy. The hill to the villas green and steep in front of you. A staircase half hidden to the left, eagle rampant across the lintel. There's a wide brushstroke of darkening blue above it all, and the kind of late day quiet that settles on an empty house.

Up those stairs, off limits to gawkers and fanatics and movie buffs, is a little balcony, with an arbor just below it, and beyond it another short sweep of stairs with a wrought-iron railing curving up to Joe's apartment door. Without moving—without even opening my eyes—I can see it all so clearly.

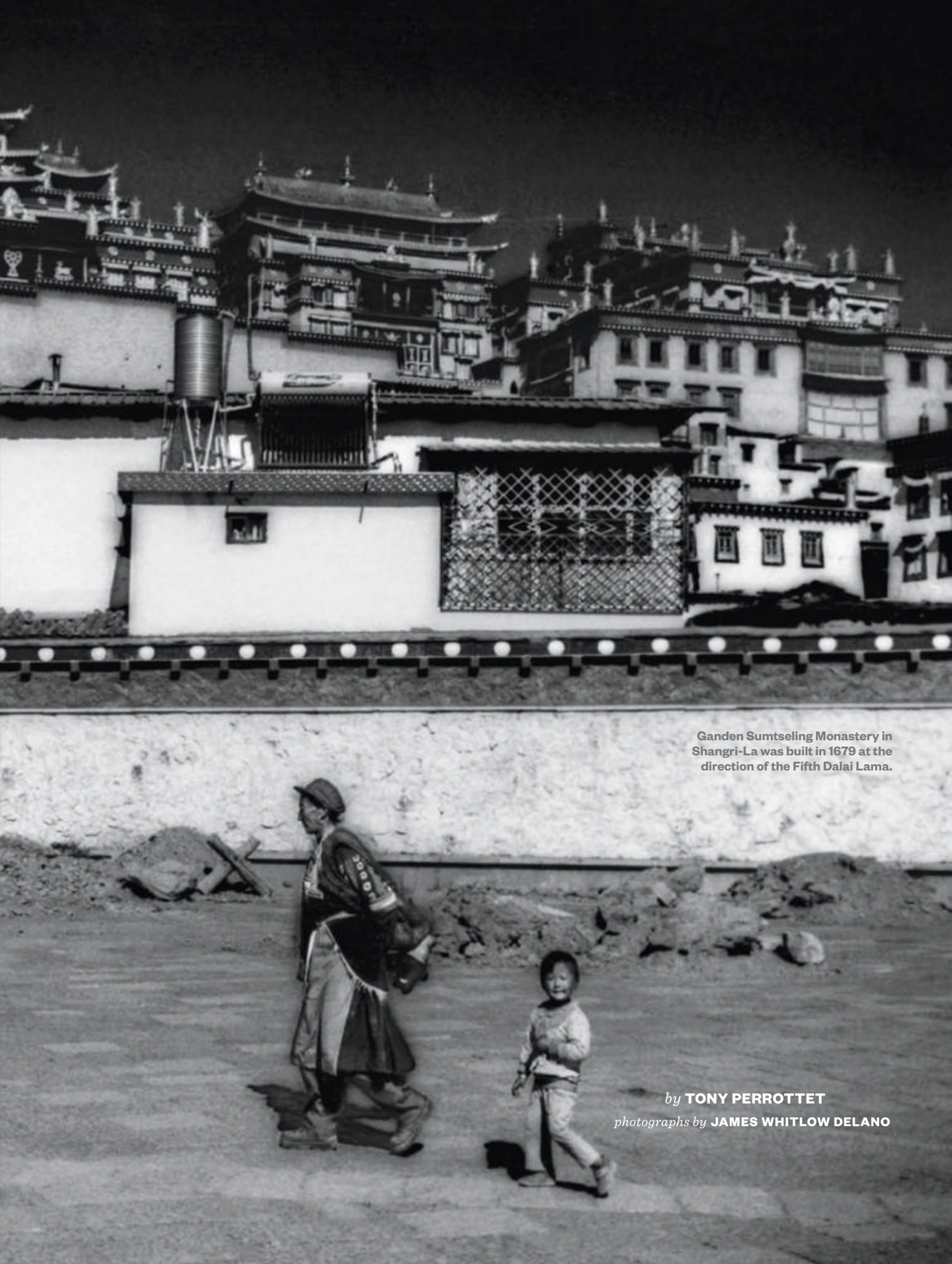
A city is what it does to you. On the Via Margutta, every one of us is beautiful. Every one of us lives forever. And Rome has all the time in the world.

RIGHT: EVERETT COLLECTION



The Indiana Jones of imperial China has become a modern pop-culture celebrity

TRAVELER *IN THE* SUNSET CLOUDS



Ganden Sumtseling Monastery in Shangri-La was built in 1679 at the direction of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

by **TONY PERROTTET**

photographs by **JAMES WHITLOW DELANO**

TO CONJURE THE LOST WORLD OF IMPERIAL CHINA, *you might resort to the tales of Marco Polo, that famed Venetian interloper and fabulist. But you could find a more intimate view in the lively work of the most revered ancient Chinese travel writer of all, Xu Xiake (pronounced "Syoo Syah-kuh"), hailed by his growing number of modern admirers as, among other things, "imperial China's Indiana Jones" on account of his death-defying adventures. Born in 1587, he was an imposing figure, over six feet tall and as sinewy as a warrior monk, with luminous green eyes and an ascetic air. At age 20, the well-to-do young scholar decided to devote his life to his "wanderlust" and "love of the strange," taking the poetic nom de plume Traveler in the Sunset Clouds. Voraciously curious, he would tackle any mountain peak—"as nimble as an ape and as sturdy as an ox," one poet said—to experience a sublime view, which would inspire him to rapture. "I cried out in ecstasy," he wrote of one summit, "and could have danced out of sheer joy and admiration." A friend described Xu's character as "Drifting with the Water, Floating in the Wind," while another called him "half stubborn, half deranged." It's our good fortune that Xu was at large in the golden age of Chinese travel,*

during the prosperous Ming dynasty (1368-1644), when commerce was booming and transportation was safer and more efficient than ever before. Tourist numbers reached record levels, seemingly in response to a proverb of the time that an educated gent should "read ten thousand books and travel ten thousand li," referring to the imperial measure of roughly one-third of a mile. Xu's literary monument would be his travel diary, or *youji*, which he intended to edit for publication. But he died at age 54, almost certainly of malaria, before he had the chance. Today scholars see that as a boon to history.



Because there is so little casual prose from the period, this unedited version, which runs to 1,100 pages, has unique historical value. "It's a spontaneous, step-by-step account of his experiences on the road," says Timothy Brook, a historian who has written several books on the Ming dynasty, most recently *Mr. Selden's Map of China*. "His remarkable powers of observation bring the era to life for us in an extraordinarily vivid way." The pages overflow with sharp details—encounters with camel herders, complaints about inns, comic arguments with recalcitrant porters. The enormous text was hand-copied by relatives and officially published by Xu's descendants in 1776.

Xu Xiake has long been admired by Chinese intellectuals for his poetic writings and by others for his enviably footloose lifestyle—even Chairman Mao once said, "I wish I could do as Xu Xiake did." But today, as millions of newly affluent Chinese are starting to travel, Xu is being reborn as a pop-culture celebrity. Beijing has embraced him as the "patron saint" of tourism, giving a gloss of ancient tradition to the lucrative new industry. Postage stamps have been issued in Xu's honor and statues erected in the towns he visited. His diary has been reissued in annotated editions for academics and graphic novel versions for children, and a biopic has been broadcast on national TV. China's National Tourism Day is May 19, the date he started his first journey, in 1613. There are now Xu Xiake travel awards and Xu Xiake rock-climbing contests. Most surreal, his ancestral home near Shanghai is now a national monument with a tourism park attached. Walking trails are signposted with images of our hero, like a kung fu film star, swinging down cliffs by rope, crawling through crevices on his stomach and fighting off bandits with his staff. Bill Bryson or Jan Morris or Paul Theroux could only dream of such hero worship.

To me, there was an intriguing irony that a land known for its teeming population and unrelenting industry should embrace a travel writer who was so solitary and poetic. Readers of Xu's diary are surely struck by the gulf between his romantic ideals and the brash reality of China today, where sites like the Great Wall are jammed with bus tours. "The Chinese government's entire raison d'être is bigger, faster, more," says Brook. "It certainly wasn't Xu Xiake's. He was in love with

BBBAR / ALAMY

nature. He would pause on his journey to watch a stream flowing. He just wanted to contemplate the world."

Xu Xiake's last and most ambitious road trip was to Yunnan, which happens to be on the front lines of Chinese tourism today. This scenic province in the foothills of the Himalayas was particularly difficult to reach in Xu's time and represented a lifelong dream. He set off in the fall of 1636, at age 49, crowing to a friend, "I will make a report on the exotic realms," and on a four-year journey he explored Yunnan's snow-capped peaks and tropical valleys, visiting Buddhist monasteries and mingling with extraordinary cultures on the border of Tibet. Today, Yunnan has again become the ideal fantasy destination in China, and for reasons Xu Xiake would actually applaud. Young Chinese who have grown up in the polluted industrial cities are valuing its electric blue skies, pure mountain air and aura of spirituality. On one recent visit to China, I met a hiking guide in her 20s who had escaped the reeking factory zone of Guangzhou and had the zeal of a convert: "For Chinese people, Yunnan is where your dreams can be fulfilled."

As I hopped a flight in Hong Kong for the Himalayas, I was wary of more than the altitude: In the new China, dreamscapes can vanish overnight. So I decided to follow Xu Xiake's own travel route to find any vestiges of his classical Yunnan, hoping that the changes over the last 375 years wouldn't require too many creative leaps of imagination.

In China, any destination that has been "discovered" is affected on a staggering scale. This was obvious when I landed in Lijiang, a legendary town at 8,000 feet in elevation, beneath Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, which for centuries has been the most idyllic entry point to Yunnan. When Xu arrived in 1639, he found it a colorful outpost populated by the proud Naxi people, its streets lined with willows and canals fed by pure alpine springs. This was the very edge of the Chinese empire, where Han settlers from the overpopulated coast mingled with local cultures considered half-barbaric. The monarch, Mu Zeng, invited the traveler to an epic banquet of "remarkable foodstuffs," including a beloved Himalayan delicacy, yak tongue—although Xu couldn't quite appreciate the flavor, he complained, because he was already too full and inebriated on rice wine.

Centuries later, at least the hedonism lives on: Lijiang has reinvented itself as China's most raucous party town, with an ambience resembling a Shanghai nightclub. Its ancient storefronts have been lovingly restored, but behind the delicate lattice shutters are karaoke bars, where singers compete over loudspeakers, wailing along to Korean pop. The cobblestone alleys are jam-packed with young revelers from every corner of China. Lijiang is a parable of the dangers of success. It was barely known before 1997, when Unesco anointed its historic center as one of China's first World Heritage sites. Since then, tourism has been promoted without planning or restraint, and a mind-boggling eight million visitors a year now flush through its narrow streets, making Venice seem a model of bucolic calm. To its critics, Lijiang is an example of everything that can go wrong with Chinese tourism. Officials promote economic growth at any cost, they argue, pointing out that the historic part of town has been overrun with cheap souvenir stores while local residents have been driven out. Johnson Chang, a Chinese art curator and expert on traditional culture, argues that the mass

A 1987 stamp issued in honor of Xu Xiake's 400th birthday portrays the young writer determined to pursue a life of travel (opposite). From Lijiang, Xu traveled to Dali, now a hippie haven, and to a remote area near the Tibetan border later renamed Shangri-La.



JAMIE SIMON





The Jinsha River, the upper reach of the Yangtze, flows into Tiger Leaping Gorge, which is 12,000 feet deep in places. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain looms in the background.


樂園
文治巷23-1号
喝茶
tea
听歌



A young man on a Segway navigates the stone streets of Lijiang. Once the ancient capital of the Naxi minority, the "City of Bridges" is now full of shops run by outsiders.



Old and new collide in Lijiang. Naxi herbalist Dr. Ho sees a patient in Baisha (above), while a Chinese tourist (opposite) sports Mao-era propaganda along with bounty from a shopping spree.

tourism model can devastate historic sites as completely as a wrecking ball. "It used to be that government officials would knock down old China because they thought it had no economic value," he said. "Now they just turn it into a Disney-style theme park."

It was some comfort to read that even in the Ming dynasty commercialism was a danger. Xu Xiake was annoyed to find that at famous grottoes, extra fees were charged to cross suspension bridges or to use rope ladders. On holy mountains, some visitors hired sedan chairs in order to be carried to the summit, or even "sea horses"—local farm boys who transported tourists on their backs, tied on by cloth strips like swaddled babies. There were package tours: Confucius' birthplace, Qufu, was a prototype tourist trap, with three grades of tour on offer in the rambling hotel complexes. After a guided climb of nearby Mount Tai, first-class guests were treated to a gourmet meal and exquisite opera, while budget travelers made do with a lute soloist. And red light districts thrived. At one jasmine-scented resort south of Nanjing, powdered courtesans sang seductive songs at their windows, while waves of male customers filed back and forth before them. When a client made an assignation, a spotter would yell out, "Miss X has a guest!" and torch-bearing assistants would lead him inside via a secret doorway, according to one account in *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China*. Later, however, "a tinge of desperation" would prevail as hungover men "groped their way through the darkness like ghosts."

In modern Lijiang, the only way to avoid the chaos is to emerge in the early hours of the morning. The town is eerily silent, and I wandered the maze of alleyways to the Mufu Palace, just as Xu Xiake had done when he met with the Naxi king. For a full hour, it was a haunting experience. I had breathtaking views over the terra-cotta roofs of the old town, looking like a sepia-tinted postcard. Even more evocative are the nearby villages just below the snow line, where houses are crafted from gray stone and Naxi women still carry water barrels on their backs. Here, ancient traditions are still resilient. In Baisha,



I met a traditional herbalist named Dr. Ho, who in his 90s plies his trade in a rambling house crammed with glass vials and plants. (His health advice was simple: "I recommend two things. First, stay positive. Second, be careful what you put in your mouth.")

Dr. Ho suggested I visit Xuan Ke, a classical musician whose passion for the guqin, a zitherlike stringed instrument, traces a direct lineage back to the literati of the Ming period. During the Communist rampages against the arts, Xuan spent 21 years as a prisoner in a tin mine. On his release, he reunited with Naxi musicians who had met in secret to pass on their skills, often rehearsing in silence, using lutes with no strings, drums with no hide and flutes without wind. Now a successful recording artist in his late 80s, he lives like a reclusive rock star in a grand mansion where a half-dozen ferocious Tibetan mastiffs are kept on chains. Thanks to the stubborn Naxi spirit, Xuan told me, classical music has survived in Yunnan better than other parts of China. "Everywhere else, young musicians try to update the original style," he said. "But we see the value of staying the same." To prove the point, he invited me to hear his Naxi Orchestra not far from Lijiang's karaoke strip. During their performance, the 30 or so elderly musicians were forced to compete with the booming rock music from the nearby bars. While surtitles translated the singer's ethereal lyrics into English—"A lotus on the fairy's hand dabs dew on a golden tray," for example—the bass from the karaoke clubs grew so loud that my seat began to shudder. But like the musicians on the *Titanic*, the Naxi artists didn't falter a beat, or even acknowledge the din. At least they were free to play.

It wasn't at first obvious how I would recapture Xu Xiake's love of nature, even in Yunnan. For example, one of the world's deepest ravines, Tiger Leaping Gorge, has been marred by a highway carved along its flanks and viewing points clogged by tour buses. But by following the offbeat route recorded in Xu's diary, I was able to encounter more pristine worlds.

A crowded local bus took me 112 miles south to Dali, a lakeside town beloved in the Ming dynasty for its warm

See James Whitlow Delano's complete China portfolio at **Smithsonian.com/yunnan**





Naxi orchestra director Xuan Ke has said that the group's music dates back 13 centuries. Musicians had to hide—or even bury—their instruments during Mao's Cultural Revolution.





After the old town of Lijiang was designated a Unesco World Heritage site in 1997, many longtime Naxi residents moved to more comfortable modern buildings in a newer part of town.



climate, fertile soil and spiritual aura. Now Dali is similarly admired as a Chinese hippie hangout, with funky vegetarian cafés that serve rare mushrooms and edible tree fungi such as spongy "tree ears" and a crisp item charmingly translated as "frog's skin." Its embryonic hipster culture has fostered a new environmental awareness. "Yunnan hasn't been as scarred by China's development craze over the last 30 years," said an American expat, Andrew Philhower, as we sat in a sunny craft beer garden that would not have been out of place in Boulder, Colorado. "So now they have a better chance of avoiding past mistakes. People are already aware of what they have to lose."

And certainly parts of Dali's landscape remain just as Xu Xiake would have seen them. I climbed one steep trail through the tea terraces into Cangshan National Park, through yawning canyons where autumn leaves fell like flakes of gold dust. Emulating the graffiti poets of old, park officials have dabbed inspiring messages on the trail in red paint: "Enjoy being here!" one exhorted. Another: "Save the memories!" A third, after a tiring incline, seemed more forlorn: "You can see the bright side of everything."

On his way to the Butterfly Spring, where thousands of fluttering insects still gather every spring in a whirlwind of color, Xu passed a village called Xizhou (Happy Town). I was delighted to discover it is now home to a creative experiment in sustainable tourism, the Linden Centre. In contrast to the glitzy high-rise hotels that sprout in China's megacities, the 16-room guesthouse is a renovated courtyard mansion, with an ambience more akin to an eco-lodge in Brazil. It's the brainchild of American expats Brian and Jeanee Linden, who decided to offer travelers a taste of the ancient arts, such as calligraphy, painting and tea ceremonies. "We looked all over China for the right location," Jeanee recalled, before finding this antique residence, which had survived the revolution with its décor largely intact because it had been a barracks for army officers. Even so, renovations proceeded fitfully. In a Chinese version of *A Year in Provence*, the difficulties were less with quirky tradesmen than interfering bureaucrats from four different levels of government, who held up work for months at a time.

Today, the Linden Centre is a modern update of the aristocratic refuges Xu stayed in, where provincial literati invited him to enjoy art and music over erudite banter. When it opened in 2008, it was an instant success with foreign travelers starved for historical charm in China. Chinese guests, accustomed to their five-star amenities, were at first shocked to find that, instead of Gucci and Prada stores, the Xizhou village market offered string beans and pig's feet. But a more open attitude is emerging. "Our Chinese guests are now highly educated. They've been to Europe and the U.S. And they want to exchange ideas," says Jeanee, who estimates that a quarter of the center's clientele is now local Chinese. "Yunnan is really like a laboratory of tourism. Suddenly, the new generation wants a genuine experience."

*Xu lived on the mountain for several months, captivated by its **otherworldly beauty** while staying in a solitary hut far from the pilgrims whose torches lit up the sky.*

Traveling into the remoter regions of Yunnan is still a challenge. Squeezed into tiny bus seats on bone-jarring cliff highways and bartering for noodles in roadside stalls, I began to realize that few in the Chinese government can have actually read Xu Xiake's diary. Despite his devotion to travel, he is an ambiguous poster boy for its pleasures, and as his diary attests, he suffered almost every mishap imaginable on his Yunnan journey.

He was robbed three times, contracted mysterious diseases and was lost and swindled. After one hapless mountain guide led him in circles, Xu questioned the whole effort: "I realized this was the most inauspiciously timed of a lifetime's travels." On another occasion, while waiting for funds after a theft, he became so broke he sold his clothes to buy food. He once recited poetry in exchange for mushrooms.

Sadly, Xu's traveling companion, a monk named Jingwen, fell ill with dysentery on the road and died. He was an eccentric character who apparently carried a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* written in his own blood, but he was devoted to Xu, becoming injured while defending him from a violent robbery. Xu, devastated, decided to bury his friend's remains at the ostensible goal of the journey, a sacred peak called Jizu Shan, which is now almost entirely forgotten by travelers. I decided to follow his footsteps there, too. (The name means Chicken Foot Mountain, referring to its unique shape, three spurs around a central summit, resembling a fowl's claw.)

In the Ming dynasty, all mountains were considered the homes of immortal beings and were thought to be riddled with haunted caves where one might find hidden potions of eternal life. But Jizu Shan also boasted a thriving Buddhist community of resident monks, luring pilgrims from as far away as India and Mongolia. Xu lived on the mountain for several months, captivated by its otherworldly beauty while staying in a solitary hut far from the pilgrim hordes whose torches lit up the sky "like the glittering stars." ("Spending the night of New Year's Eve deep in the myriad peaks is better than a thousand nights in the world of men.") Xu even wrote a guidebook to Jizu Shan in verse, citing ten great attractions.

Today, the rare visitor to Chicken Foot Mountain finds an old cable car installed by the local government in a vain attempt to boost tourist numbers. When I arrived, the only other passenger was a pious banker from Beijing. Suddenly, the lack of crowds made Jizu Shan a magical site. My goal was

A young Naxi woman in Lijiang wears a traditional headdress, part of a costume usually donned for festivals and special occasions. Roughly 300,000 Naxi still live in Yunnan province.

to find Jingwen's burial site, which Xu Xiake chose because it had the best feng shui on the mountain, but my only directions were from a cheap, not-to-scale map. Setting off into the forest, I passed a broad, carved-out tree where a bodhisattva, or Buddhist holy man, had once lived for 40 years. Inside was an altar and—I was startled to find—a real monk. He told me he had been living in the tree for a decade, and had learned to sleep upright, in the lotus position. He showed me the site of the house where Xu stayed; it had survived until the 1960s, when the Red Guards destroyed it along with many other religious buildings.

He pointed the way to Jingwen's tomb, and I couldn't resist asking if he was lonely in his tree. "How can I be?" he smiled. "I have the Buddha for company."

Half an hour later, I stumbled across the grave along with a marble wall bearing Jingwen's name. It did indeed have a panoramic view to a slender pagoda on a knife-edge cliff, and I noticed the monk's spirit had still not been abandoned: a box of incense sticks was hidden in a niche, along with three matches. It seemed appropriate to light an offering. The first match blew out in the wind. So did the second. But the last spluttered to life, sending up a sweet plume.

The site felt like a poignant memorial to Xu Xiake himself. When he buried his friend here in 1638, Xu was uncharacteristically weary of travel. "Now with (my) soul broken at the end of the world," he mourned, "I can only look alone." Xu returned to Jizu Shan at the end of his Yunnan expedition, in 1640, but he was exhausted and ill. He had contracted what was probably malaria in the jungle lowlands. The disease became so serious that his royal patron, the Naxi king, provided a sedan chair to carry him home across China, a journey that took roughly six months. But once back in his ancestral residence, the inveterate traveler was unable to settle down. According to a friend, Xu felt indifferent to his family and preferred to lie all day in his bed, "stroking some of his strange rocks."

One is reminded of Tennyson's *Ulysses*: "How dull it is to pause, to make an end / To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!" Xu died in 1641.

*A remote lodge offers accommodation in **sepulchral Tibetan houses** that also happen to be appointed with mini-bars and down comforters.*

Tradition holds in China that before he became ill, Xu Xiake continued his journey from Yunnan north into the Buddhist kingdom of Tibet. The land had always fascinated him, and he had even written an essay about the Dalai Lama. But most historians dismiss the idea. The overwhelming evidence suggests that King Mu Zeng forbade the trip because the road north was filled with bandits, and Xu obeyed.

Today, the border of Yunnan and Tibet is a final frontier of Chinese travel, and it seemed to offer a glimpse of how the future would unfold. In 2001, the county—including the only town, Dukezong—sold out by renaming itself Shangri-La and claiming to be the inspiration for the 1933 novel and 1937 Frank Capra film, *Lost Horizon*, about a magical Himalayan paradise. The name change has been a huge public-relations success. And yet, the Tibetan culture was said to be thriving in the shadows. So I hitched a ride there with a French chef named Alexandre, in a yellow jeep with no windows. For the five-hour journey, I huddled under rugs wearing a fur hat to protect against the freezing wind and sunglasses to block the blinding light. After all the crowded bus trips I'd taken, being in the open air was exhilarating; I felt acutely alive, much as Jack Kerouac had said of his ride in the back of a pickup truck speeding through the Rockies.

Jagged mountain ranges eventually closed around us like jaws. Tibetan houses huddled together in enclaves as if for warmth. Women trudged by with sun-beaten faces, their babies in woolen slings. The real Shangri-La was no paradise, with trucks rumbling down the streets carrying construction materials for the next hotel project. Alexandre pulled up before the ornate wooden structures of the old town, where a smoky restaurant was filled with families huddled over noodle bowls. The specialty was a hot pot topped with slices of yak meat, the lean, tasty flesh in a hearty broth fortifying me for the thin air at 9,800 feet.

A few hours later, in the valley of Ringha, one of the holiest places for Buddhists in the Himalayas, the remote Banyan Tree lodge offers accommodation in sepulchral Tibetan houses that also happen to be appointed with mini-bars and down comforters. On the bottom floor, where farm animals were once stabled, wooden tubs bring relief with aromatic Yunnanese bath salts. And yet, past and present converged easily. When I went for a stroll, pigs meandered by and farmers repairing a roof offered me the local hot tea made of yak milk, salt and butter.

Standing on the steps of the village temple, I raised a cup to Xu Xiake. For a moment, it seemed possible that culturally sensitive tourism could help preserve Yunnan. But after I got back to New York, I learned that a fire had razed much of Shangri-La's ancient Tibetan town. Someone had forgotten to turn off the heater in a guesthouse. Local authorities, despite their lust for development, had not provided working fire hydrants and the wooden architecture burned like tinder—an irreplaceable loss.

Xu Xiake championed the educational value of travel, and its liberating potential. "A great man should in the morning be at the blue sea, and in the evening at Mount Cangwu," he wrote. "Why should I restrict myself to one corner of the world?"

But China, of course, is no longer the playground of just one man.

"Looking westwards we had a life and death pledge to go to the mountains," Xu wrote of his travel companion, the Buddhist monk Jingwen, whose tomb lies on Chicken Foot Mountain (right).



WINDS OF WAR

In 1780, Lafayette sailed for America, armed with news that France would aid the Revolution. Today a new replica ship retraces the marquis' voyage

BY JOSHUA LEVINE

The sun was sparkling off the Bay of Biscay and a light breeze barely ruffled the sails as the three-masted frigate *l'Hermione* headed out from La Rochelle for sea trials one morning last October. It was a beautiful day, dammit! This would be one of the new ship's first times out in open water, and the captain, a Breton sea dog named Yann Cariou, was eager to see what it and its crew of 18 seasoned sailors and 54 volunteers could do. The balmy weather would test neither.

Cariou fired up the two 400-horsepower Italian engines and motored north looking for wind. At dinner in the galley, he made a show of peeking under the tables, as if he were playing a children's game. "No wind here," he says with mock gravity. But there was good news, meaning bad news, on the radar. A big storm off Iceland was generating nasty low-pressure systems as far south as Brittany, so that's where we headed.

illustration by **ROMY BLÜMEL**

Many people had waited a long time for this moment. The French spent 17 years and $28 million replicating the *Hermione* down to the last detail, from its gilded-lion figurehead to the fleur-de-lis painted on its stern. When the original *Hermione* was built in 1779, it was the pride of a newly re-energized French Navy: a 216-foot, 32-gun barracuda that could take a real bite out of the arrogant English, who not only ruled the waves but concocted an in-your-face anthem about it—"Rule, Britannia!"—in 1740.

With a sleek, copper-bottomed hull, the *Hermione* could out-sail almost any ship it couldn't out-shoot. Even the English recognized the *Hermione*'s excellence when they captured its sister ship, the *Concorde*. They promptly reverse-engineered their prize, drawing detailed schematics to help recreate the vessel for their own fleet.

This proved a stroke of luck 200 years later when France decided it was tired of being the only great seagoing nation without a replicated tall ship of its own. "In the 1980s, we restored the shipyards at Rochefort, where *l'Hermione* was built, and made them a cultural monument," says Benedict Donnelly, who heads France's *Hermione* project, the Association Hermione-





La Fayette, supported by public funds and private donations. "But then in the '90s we said, we're missing something. A recreated tall ship. France is really the poor relation among nations in this department. The *Hermione* was the jewel of the navy from a glorious moment in French maritime history—which hasn't always been glorious, thanks to our friends the English. Happily, our English friends had captured the *Hermione*'s sister ship and left us the plans."

There's another reason that the *Hermione* sails again—it possesses a particular transatlantic back story and cachet. In March 1780, the *Hermione* set out from Rochefort bound for Boston. Its speed and agility suited it ideally to the task of carrying Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, back to America. He was charged with giving George Washington the nation-saving news that France would soon be sending an infusion of arms, ships and men.

That life support was due in no small part to Lafayette's tireless cheerleading. His earlier efforts had helped nudge King Louis XVI into recognizing the United States and signing a defensive alliance with it in 1778 (just how big a nudge is open to debate, since French policy was already strongly inclined in this direction for reasons of pure realpolitik). Now, Lafayette, the public face of France in the United States, was returning to deliver the goods.

Surely Lafayette's name could work the same fund-raising magic for a recreated *Hermione*, this time in the America-to-France direction. The connection with Lafayette has brought in U.S. donors under the auspices of the Friends of Hermione-Lafayette in America, a nonprofit that has helped to raise roughly one-quarter the $4.5 million it is costing to send the replicated *Hermione* from Rochefort voyaging to America and back. Donnelly, whose own background

The *Hermione*'s replica (on trials in France, left) hews to the specifications of the swift warship that carried Lafayette (above) to America—15 miles of rope, 1,000 pulleys and 330 square feet of sail.



"Americans don't in the least know who Lafayette was. The story has been lost in the telling."

seems tailor-made for overseeing the *Hermione* project since 1992—his mother is French and his American father participated in the D-Day invasion at Normandy—says that was never a consideration. "Choosing to rebuild Lafayette's boat was not a question of marketing," he insists.

Still, a project that has often been as cash-strapped as Washington's Continentals has benefited from a brisk American tail wind. After crossing the Atlantic this month, the ship will dock in many of the ports that figured in the Revolution, to welcome the curious aboard to discover a ship lost to history and the young marquis who is a misunderstood American icon. And in Manhattan, the New-York Historical Society is mounting the exhibition "Lafayette's Hermione: Voyage 2015," on view May 29 through August 16.

Pretty much everyone in the United States has heard of Lafayette. Scores of towns around the U.S. are named for him, from Fayetteville, North Carolina, to Fayette, Maine, to Lafayette, Oregon (to this list must be added every town named La Grange, after Lafayette's manse, the Château de la Grange-Bleneau). But the man himself has been swallowed up in a hazy myth surrounding his general helpfulness.

He turns out to be more interesting than his myth, not to mention a good deal quirkier. "Americans don't in the least know who Lafayette was. The story has been lost in the telling," says Laura Auricchio, author of a new biography, *The Marquis: Lafayette Reconsidered*.

The Marquis de Lafayette who first arrived on U.S. soil in South Carolina on June 13, 1777, was an unformed, untested youth of 19. In a way, he had nowhere else to go. He had been orphaned young—his father was killed when the English crushed the French at Minden in 1759, during the Seven Years' War. The early death of his parents left him a very rich young man.

In 1774, Lafayette, then 16, was married off to 14-year-old Adrienne de Noailles, who came from one of France's best-born and most powerful families. The marriage made the provincial Lafayette an instant player at court, but his door pass did him little good. For one thing, he was a lousy dancer. Lafayette himself confessed in his memoirs that he made a clumsy courtier, undone "by the gaucheness of my manners which . . . never yielded to the graces of the court or to the charms of supper in the capital."

The match with Adrienne also brought Lafayette a lieutenant's commission in the Noailles Dragoons, and with it the promise of an army career. But here, too, he hit an unexpected wall. A broad military reorganization in 1775 affected many of France's existing regiments, Lafayette's among them. He and many others like him

F. LATREILLE / ASSOCIATION HERMIONE-LA FAYETTE; GIANNI DAGLI ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY

suddenly found themselves sidelined with little hope of advancement.

It was in this context that Lafayette took up America's fight for freedom. So did many of his frustrated compatriots, whose motives ran the gamut from high-minded to mercenary. "I am well nigh harassed to death with applications of officers to go out to America," wrote the American diplomat Silas Deane, who worked alongside Benjamin Franklin in Paris to drum up French aid.

Deane and Franklin were pretty picky, and many who asked to fight were turned away. In Lafayette, however, they recognized a pearl of great value—that is to say, great promotional value. In his signed agreement accepting Lafayette's services and commissioning him an (unpaid) major general, Deane enumerates an unusual list of qualifications for a commanding officer: "high birth, alliances, the great dignities which his family holds at this court, his considerable estates in this realm . . . and above all, his zeal for the liberty of our provinces." Thus recommended, the marquis first set sail for America in April 1777.

Lafayette never fully understood that his real job was to help get France into the war, not to fight it himself. Politically, he could be obtuse. "He was an *ingénu* and quite naive," says Auricchio. "The opposite of someone like Talleyrand."

I met with the historian Laurence Chatel de Brancion—who with co-author Patrick Villiers published the French-language biography *La Fayette: Rêver la gloire (*Dreaming of Glory*)* in 2013—at her grand apartment near Parc Monceau in Paris. On her father's side of the family (an ancestor helped found Newport, Rhode Island), Chatel de Brancion is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Through the French branch of the DAR, she oversaw a donation to the *Hermione* re-creation project. But when it comes to Lafayette the man, she takes the cold-eyed view often found on her side of the Atlantic. The man often called a "citizen of two worlds" turns out to be a hero in only one of them.



Lafayette "had a certain self-deprecating charm, and the ability to make fun of himself."

"Lafayette is just an image. He's the portrait of the terrible inconsequence of the French elite of that period," Chatel de Brancion tells me. "Franklin used Lafayette, purely and simply. He said, 'Cover this guy with glory, don't let him go too near the fighting, and send him back to France full of enthusiasm.'" Moreover, she adds dryly, "Everything the U.S. thanks Lafayette for, it should be thanking Franklin for."

Maybe so, but nobody will deny that Lafayette played his assigned part perfectly. After an initial chilly reception, he stepped quickly into the role of America's BFF—Best French Friend. This required a lot more than just showing up. Many of the Frenchmen Silas Deane sent over managed to make themselves deeply unpopular with their haughty manners and their prickly sense of entitlement (Deane later took considerable heat for this).

"These people think of nothing but their incessant intrigues and backbitings," wrote the German-born French officer Johann de Kalb, the brilliant soldier who came over with Lafayette on the 1777 voyage. "Lafayette is the sole exception. . . . He is an excellent young man."

The very qualities that made Lafayette a dud at Versailles made him a hit in Boston, Philadelphia and Valley Forge. He was straightforward and enthusiastic. He said what he meant, and then he said it again, and then he said it again. His stubborn optimism in the face of hardship rivaled Candide's. He was, well, a lot like us. "He had a certain self-deprecating charm, and the ability to make fun of himself, which is not the French style of humor," says Auricchio.

Crucially, Lafayette won over George Washington, a commander-in-chief with a marked distaste for intimacy and a hostility to the French officer class. In explaining how Lafayette broke the ice, Chatel de Brancion makes much of the fact that Lafayette fought in the blue uniform of a major general in the Continental Army. "We've lost the subtlety of that gesture today. Washington was honored that a foreign aristocrat would fight in that uniform—it did him, Washington, enormous credit."

But clothing alone can't explain the unusually affectionate bond that sprang up between the two men. Lafayette spent much of the war at Washington's side and at one point pretty much moved into his house. He named his own son George Washington. By all accounts, the relationship was a bright spot in both their lives. It has withstood the full Freudian treatment over the years; history has yet to find a dark underside to it.

It didn't hurt that Lafayette happened to be the truest of true believers. Auricchio CONTINUED ON PAGE 96

The 1,260-ton replica (during construction, right) required 40,000 cubic feet of oak to recreate the ship that Lafayette reported, "sails like a bird." The marquis (above) wounded at Brandywine, 1777.

KEAN COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES; ASSOCIATION HERMIONE-LA FAYETTE



IN APRIL 1865, AMERICA WAS

a different place from what it had been just four years before. Atlanta: burned. Richmond: burned. Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: burned. Swaths of the South were scissored with trenches and abatis and pocked with shell holes. Washington, D.C. had become an army town, with barricades in the streets and more than 500 bordellos behind the shades. And in every city and town, North as well as South, there were changes among the people: men who were gone, men who were maimed, people who had been masters who were now nearly helpless, people who were free who had to discover how to live freely. The story of America had been revised with chapters on Antietam, Gettysburg and Andersonville, and on emancipation and citizenship and a new birth of freedom, the meanings of which were unsettled then and elude full agreement even now.

Today, 150 years after the fighting ended, the Civil War remains central in the American imagination. Some of the landscapes are changing, but the stories prevail—tales of courage and foolishness and the very human outcomes that resulted. For the last four years, Americans have been marking anniversaries, from Fort Sumter onward. What we offer now, as a last 150th-year look back, is a tour of less-visited sites that reflect more intimately how the Civil War changed the nation.



Along Third Avenue in Midtown Manhattan—where New York's infamous draft riots began.

By Jamie Malanowski

MAPS BY MARTIN SANDERS



FROM NEW YORK CITY TO FRANCE TO BRAZIL, SITES TOUCHED BY AMERICA'S CIVIL WAR HAVE BEEN LITTLE NOTED AND NOT LONG REMEMBERED

Beyond GETTYSBURG

Liberation

THE COMBAHEE RIVER, SC



ALTHOUGH FEDERAL TROOPS ROUTINELY liberated any slaves found when they moved into Rebel-held territory, they did not routinely launch actions with the specific objective of freeing slaves. Alone in that category is the June 2, 1863, expedition made up of the Second South Carolina Volunteer Regiment, a unit consisting of 300 former slaves, and a section of the Third Rhode Island Battery. The mission was conceived and led, at least in part, by Harriet Tubman, which made her the first woman in U.S. history to plan and lead a military raid. It is commemorated today with a state highway marker on Route 17, just south of where the Harriet Tubman Bridge carries the road over the Combahee River north of Beaufort.

Famous for her service on the Underground Railroad before the war, Tubman was working as a cook and nurse for the U.S. Army in South Carolina—at least officially. But she had been issued a pass by Gen. David Hunter, a leading voice for emancipation, that gave her freedom to move about the countryside unimpeded. Visiting camps of escaped slaves that had been set up on the South Carolina coast, she recruited ten men to scout the Combahee River and the Lowcountry plantations along its shore. She also paid escaped slaves for updated intelligence.

Hunter asked Tubman if she would go upriver with three gunboats and show the troops where mines had been planted, where railroad bridges were located and where escaped slaves were hiding. Tubman agreed to go if Col. James Montgomery was given command of the mission. Montgomery, a Kansas jayhawker, was an ardent abolitionist who had ridden with John Brown before the war.

The mere presence of the Union flotilla set off an exodus of slaves out of the fields bordering the Combahee and toward the gunboats. "In vain, then, the drivers used their whips in their efforts to hurry the poor creatures back to their quarters," wrote Tubman biographer Sarah H. Bradford. Tubman said she'd never seen such a sight: "Here you'd see a woman wid a pail on her head, rice a smokin' in it jus' as she'd taken it from de fire, young one hangin' on behind, one han' roun' her forehead to hold on." Almost 800 slaves gave the lie to Southern claims of their passive loyalty as they flocked to be rowed out to the gunboats and freedom.



The Gunnell House in Fairfax, VA: Where the general slept, Mosby struck.

Sneak Attack

FAIRFAX, VA



LT. JOHN SINGLETON MOSBY—THE CON-federacy's legendary "Gray Ghost"—staged one of the war's greatest coups in the home of Dr. William P. Gunnell, a handsome two-story brick house at 10520 Main Street, Fairfax (now occupied by offices for the Truro Angli-

PP. 64-65, 66-67: ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN



can Church). Before dawn on March 9, 1863, Mosby led 29 men through the woods that filled a gap in the Union lines above Fairfax Courthouse. He was searching for a colonel in the New Jersey cavalry whose father, an English lord, had sneeringly labeled Mosby and his rangers a "pack of horse thieves." The colonel had gone to Washington, but there was a consolation prize available: Brig. Gen. Edwin Stoughton, who had headquartered himself at Gunnell's home. Stoughton, far from enemy positions, had not deployed guards; danger seemed unfathomable until the moment Mosby entered his bedroom.

Mosby recalls slapping the sleeping officer on the back and asking, "General, did you ever hear of Mosby?"

"Yes," replied Stoughton. "Have you caught him?"

Along with Stoughton, Mosby's men absconded with two captains, 30 enlisted men and 58 horses. Among Rebels, the exploit was widely celebrated, but some cavalry officers, perhaps jealous, harrumphed at the loose ways of Mosby's men. When Mosby turned Stoughton over to Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, the cavalry officer (and nephew of Robert E. Lee) snubbed the Gray Ghost while warmly greeting the West Point classmate who was now his prisoner.

President Lincoln later observed that he "didn't mind the loss of the brigadier as much as the horses, for I can make a much better general in five minutes, but the horses cost one hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece."

Unfriendly Fire

NEW YORK, NY



IN EARLY JULY 1863, WITH NEW YORK City stripped of soldiers sent to Pennsylvania to stop Lee's invasion of the North, a new conscription law took effect. It called for a disproportionately high number of troops to be raised in New York, gave provost marshals new powers to arrest draft evaders and deserters, and allowed men of means to buy substitutes for $300. Opposition to the law smoldered as the names of those who died at Gettysburg appeared in the newspapers; as those names were replaced with the names of the first draftees, anger burst into active resistance.

The draftees' numbers had been pulled at the headquarters of the army's provost marshal, at Third Avenue and 47th Street. Before the draft was to resume on Monday, July 13, crowds converged there from the homes and factories of Lower Manhattan. Angered that the new law ended draft exemptions for firefighters, the volunteers of Black Joke Engine Company No. 33 drove off the police protecting the headquarters, smashed the wheel used to pull draft numbers and set the building ablaze. The New York City draft riot—the worst civil disorder in U.S. history—was on.

The damage was widespread, but it targeted primarily rich people, Republicans and African-Americans. Brooks Brothers was sacked, Fifth Avenue mansions were looted, and the *New York Tribune* was attacked. The *New York Times* mounted a pair of Gatling guns in its front windows, one manned by its owner, the other by its largest stockholder. But the day's culminating outrage was the burning of the Colored Orphan Asylum, on Fifth Avenue between 43rd and 44th Streets. It put more than 200 children—all of whom survived—out on the street. Today no plaque or marker commemorates the fate of the orphanage on a block now occupied by retail, office and empty spaces.

Before order was re-established that Thursday evening, 119 people had been killed, either by the rioters or in firefights with soldiers fresh from Gettysburg, and the damage came to the modern equivalent of more than $27 million. Conscription didn't resume until August, after the Lincoln administration cut the city's quota from 26,000 men to 12,000. Relief agencies were set up to buy substitutes for firefighters, police officers and men who had families to support. A group of wealthy merchants organized relief for indigent African-Americans, and the Union League Club raised two regiments of black troops, the first of which departed for the front on March 5, 1864. "Eight months ago, the African race in this city were literally hunted down like wild beasts," the *Times* noted. Now those men "march in solid platoons, with shouldered muskets, slung knapsacks, and buckled cartridge-boxes down through our gayest avenues and our busiest thoroughfares."

Unsafe Harbor

CHERBOURG, FRANCE



THE MOST CELEBRATED AND MOST RE-viled ship in the Confederate Navy, the *Alabama* had, in just two years, captured 64 American merchant ships worth $5.1 million. Showing the wear of such hard duty, the vessel sailed into Cherbourg for repairs in June 1864. But Capt. Raphael Semmes met with a technicality: All berths were reserved for the French Navy; any waiver would have to come directly from Emperor Napoleon III, who was—Q*uelle dommage!*—on vacation in Biarritz. Semmes applied, but before the emperor could return to Paris, the USS *Kearsarge* appeared on June 19. The Union ship had been draped in anchor chain, turning it into a homemade ironclad. Painted black, the chain disappeared against the hull.

Semmes gave battle right then, before *Kearsarge* Capt. John Winslow could summon reinforcements. After 9 that morning, the *Alabama* left the harbor, trailed by civilian boats and an English yacht eager to catch the spectacle. Semmes opened fire around 11 a.m., and the ships exchanged fire without effect for about 15 minutes—until a shot from the *Kearsarge* disabled the *Alabama*'s rudder. Winslow poured on the fire, and Semmes raised the white flag. As his ship sank, the *Kearsarge* captured almost half his crew of 145, but Semmes and several others escaped aboard a British ship. Two Confederates (of 21 who died as a result of the battle) are buried, along with the lone Union fatality, in the Cherbourg Old Communal Cemetery.

The U.S. government's claims against Britain, where the *Alabama* was built in violation of the Neutrality Act, were not settled until 1871, but a longer-lasting effect of the duel was a painting by Édouard Manet. For years it was believed that Manet had been in one of the civilian boats. Not so; *The Battle of the U.S.S. "Kearsarge" and the C.S.S. "Alabama"* was based on news reports. Dominated by swirling smoke and a roiling sea, the painting, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, captures the terror of combat at sea.

Town for the Taking

ST. ALBANS, VT



ANDRES GONZALEZ



Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site, Irwinville, GA: A bridge leads to the place where the Confederate president was captured.

PP. 70–71: ELLIOT DUDIK

THE HISTORICAL MARKER IN TAYLOR Park only begins to describe what happened on October 19, 1864. Late that afternoon, a tall, handsome man dismounted from a horse in front of the American House Hotel on Main Street in St. Albans, just 15 miles south of the Canadian border. His name was Bennett Young, and he had been staying in town for a few days, letting on little about himself beyond evident interests in the Bible and fishing. On that Wednesday, he drew a pair of Colt revolvers and said, "Gentlemen, I am a Confederate officer, and my men have come to take your town. Anyone who resists will be shot." Young had been in Canada for months, recruiting escaped Confederate POWs to conduct raids on presumptively safe American towns. Now the northernmost raid of the Civil War was underway. Twenty-one raiders had entered St. Albans; while some of them held some townspeople prisoner in Taylor Park, others robbed the three banks of about $208,000. Some residents fired at the Confederates, fatally wounding one; one resident was killed in return. The fleeing Rebels tried to burn the town down, but their firebombs proved to be duds. American posses crossed into Canada and located many of the raiders, who were arrested by Canadian constables. The Canadians returned what money the raiders still had and charged Young and four of his men with violating Canada's neutrality, but they dropped the charges a month later for lack of evidence. One of the three banks that were robbed, the Franklin County Bank, still stands (as a TD Bank branch), as does the American House.

Endgame

IRWINVILLE, GA



INFORMED ON APRIL 2, 1865, THAT HIS army could no longer defend Richmond, President Jefferson Davis evacuated the Confederate capital, on an 11 p.m. train heading for Danville, Virginia. From that new seat of government, Davis announced, "Nothing is now needed to render our triumph certain but the exhibition of our own unquenchable resolve."

Then Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his army on April 9 at Appomattox Court House, and Davis was forced to move again, to Greensboro, North Carolina.

And after Gens. Joseph E. Johnston and P.G.T. Beauregard informed him of their plans to seek terms, Davis planned to make for Texas, where Gen. Kirby Smith was holding on. The president was in Charlotte, North Carolina, on April 19, when he was informed that President Lincoln had been assassinated five days earlier. (A plaque in the sidewalk at South Tryon and Fourth Streets marks the spot where he received the news.) "If it were to be done, it were better it were well done," he is said to have

remarked, apparently paraphrasing *Macbeth*. The words seem callous, but it asks a lot of a man in Davis' position to be magnanimous.

Lincoln's death profoundly influenced Davis' fate. Meeting with Gen. William T. Sherman and others that March, Lincoln had said, "Now, General, I'm bound to oppose the escape of Jeff Davis, but if you could manage to let him slip out unbeknownst-like, I guess it wouldn't hurt me much." But Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, was far less liberal: He offered a reward of $100,000 in gold for Davis' capture.

In the predawn hours of May 10, near the tiny village of Irwinville in southern Georgia, Federal cavalry found Davis and his party. (A monument—a bust of Davis atop a white stone base—marks the capture site.) It was raining at the time, and Davis was wearing a shawl to keep his head dry, which gave birth to the calumny that he was trying to disguise himself in women's clothes. He was charged with treason and spent two years in prison before being released without a trial and given amnesty.

Last Man Falling

BROWNSVILLE, TX

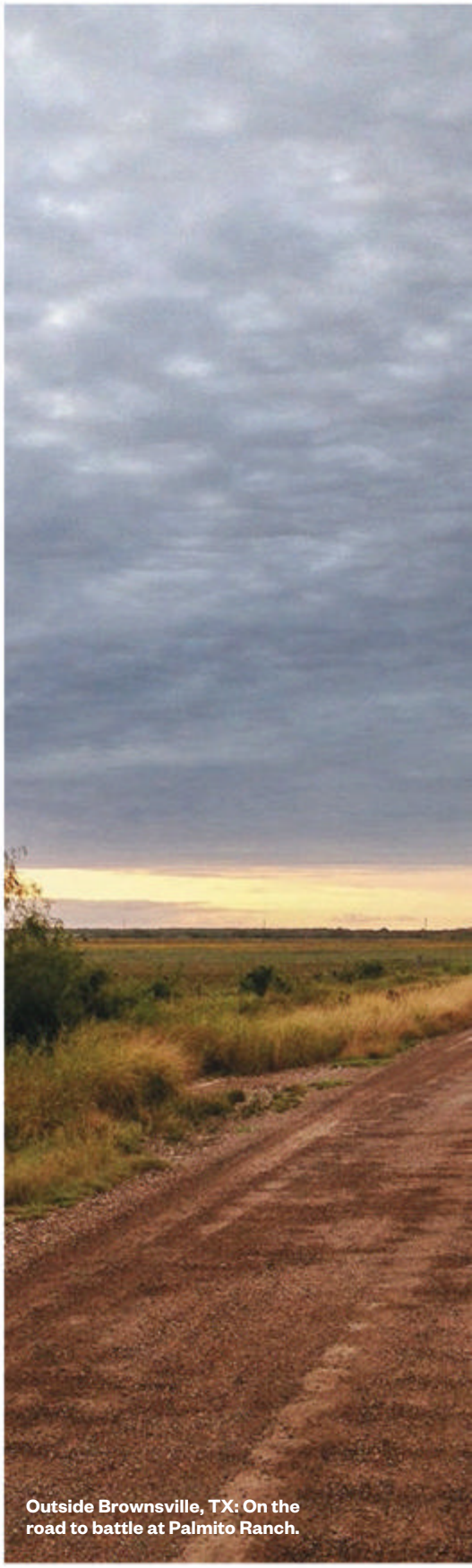


THE LAST SOLDIER TO DIE IN ACTION during the Civil War was killed by vanity. In the spring of 1865, while Union troops dealt death blows to Confederate hopes, an unofficial truce prevailed in Texas; neither side seemed keen to shed blood in what had proved to be a sideshow to battles fought farther east. The Confederacy's surrender was a major topic, though the question was when it would be honorable.

Receiving news only in fragments, Confederate Gen. Kirby Smith knew that Robert E. Lee had surrendered and that Jefferson Davis was on the move. In late April he told the remnant of his fast-fading army, "The great resources of this department, its vast extent, the numbers, the discipline, and the efficiency of the army, will secure to our country terms that a proud people with honor can accept, and may, under the Providence of God, be the means of checking the triumph of our enemy and of securing the final success of our cause." He felt constrained not to act precipitously.

On the other hand, one man who felt obliged to act was Theodore Barrett of the 62nd U.S. Colored Infantry. Stationed on the east bank of the Rio Grande near Brownsville, Barrett, a white officer newly breveted to brigadier general, evidently decided that the greatest clash of arms in North American history could not draw to a close without his personal participation in battle. On May 12, he advanced his men against a Rebel camp near Fort Brown. The Yankees initially succeeded, but were then pushed back by a Rebel counterattack. The next day Confederate forces under Maj. John Ford attacked Barrett's men at Palmito Ranch and ran them off. A total of 115 men died over the two days, the last of whom was Pvt. John Jefferson Williams of Jay County, Indiana. He was 22, or thereabouts.

Thus the last sizable clash of arms of the Civil War ended, like the first, with a Union retreat. Even so, the result did nothing to improve the fortunes of the Confederate States of America. Smith laid down his arms on June 2; his was the last significant Southern army to do so. Now the 5,400-plus acres of barren coastal plain that makes up the Palmito Ranch Battlefield National Historic Landmark are marked only by a Texas Historical Commission sign on Highway 4, a bit more than 14.5 miles east of Fort Brown, in Brownsville.



Outside Brownsville, TX: On the road to battle at Palmito Ranch.



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Expatriates

SANTA BÁRBARA D'OESTE, BRAZIL



THE 20-FOOT STONE OBELISK ON THE grounds of the Cemitério do Campo bears an alphabetized list of names right out of the American South (Ayees, Baird, Bankston, Barnsley . . .). That's because the people who bore them came right out of the American South. After the Civil War ended, many Southerners emigrated to Mexico, Central America and, most successfully, Brazil. Drawn by cheap land and a government that still allowed slavery, 4,000 to 9,000 Americans paid the $30 fare for the two-week steamship voyage to Brazil. Bothered by the weather, the language or the challenge, perhaps half returned, but those who stayed made a new beginning. Many settled around Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, outside São Paulo.

Like many immigrants, the newcomers assimilated slowly, sticking to themselves, refusing to learn Portuguese and observing their own customs and cuisines. (The precinct where they settled is still called Americana.) Many of them named their sons for Alabama Sen. William Lowndes Yancey, a firebrand of a secessionist before the war who died in 1863. But when it came to farming, slavery may have been more appealing in theory than in practice; one study found that between 1868 and 1875, four families owned a total of 66 slaves, and Brazil outlawed the practice in 1888. The Americans brought new agricultural techniques and new crops, such as watermelon and pecans, that native farmers adopted. Various dishes imported by the Americans, such as fried chicken and vinegar pie, also caught on with the locals. By the third generation, intermarriage with native Brazilians was common, and members of that generation could usually converse in Portuguese. Today, there are about 120,000 Confederado descendants, many of whom mark their heritage with an annual Festa Confederada and memorial services centered at the Cemitério do Campo, where many of the original settlers are buried—and honored on the obelisk.

TOUR OF DUTY

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FREDERICKSBURG, VA / SILVER SPRING, MD

To Arms. And a Leg *The grave and museum where two amputated limbs receive commemorative treatment*



The details of the replica (under construction last year), its area nearly the size of a football field, are based on 700 hours of laser scanning in the actual cave.

DREAM MACHINE

Opening this month, a high-tech recreation of the immortal artworks in France's Chauvet Cave shines a new light on the dawn of human imagination

by **JOSHUA HAMMER**

photographs by **STÉPHANE COMPOINT**



As I descend a footpath through subterranean gloom, **limestone walls tower 40 feet and plunge into a chasm. Gleaming stalactites dangle from the ceiling. After several twists and turns, I reach a cul-de-sac. As I shine my iPhone flashlight on the walls, out of the darkness emerge drawings in charcoal and red ocher of woolly rhinos, mammoths and other mammals that began to die out during the Pleistocene era, about 10,000 years ago.**

It feels, and even smells, like a journey into a deep hole in the earth. But this excursion is actually taking place in a giant concrete shed set in the pine-forested hills of the Ardèche Gorge in southern France. The rock walls are stone-colored mortar molded over metal scaffolding; the stalactites were fashioned from plastic and paint in a Paris atelier. Some of the wall paintings are the work of my guide, Alain Dalis, and the team of fellow artists at his studio, Arc et Os, in Montignac, north of Toulouse. Dalis pauses before a panel depicting a pride of lions in profile, sketched with charcoal. "These were drawn on polystyrene, a synthetic resin, then fitted to the wall," he tells me. The result is a precise, transfixing replica of the End Chamber, also called the Gallery of Lions, inside the actual Chauvet Cave, located three miles from here and widely viewed as the world's greatest repository of Upper Paleolithic art.



The $62.5 million facsimile is called the Caverne du Pont d'Arc, after a nearby landmark—a natural archway of eroded limestone spanning the Ardèche River and known to humans since Paleolithic times. The replica, opening to the public this month, has been in the works since 2007, when the Ardèche departmental government, recognizing that an international audience was clamoring to view the cave, decided to join with other public and private funders to build a simulacrum. Restrictions imposed by the French Ministry of Culture bar all but scientists and other researchers from the fragile environment of the cave itself.

Five hundred people—including artists and engineers, architects and special-effects designers—collaborated on the project, using 3-D computer mapping, high-resolution scans and photographs to recreate the textures and colors of the cave. "This is the biggest project of its kind in the world," declares Pascal Terrasse, the president of the Caverne du Pont d'Arc project and a deputy to the National Assembly from Ardèche. "We made this ambitious choice . . . so that everybody can admire these exceptional, but forever inaccessible treasures."

The simulated cavern is not only a stunning tribute to a place, but also to a moment. It celebrates the cold afternoon in December 1994 when three friends and weekend cavers—Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel and Christian Hillaire—followed an air current into an aperture in a limestone cliff, tunneled their way through a narrow passage, using hammers and awls to chip away at the rocks and stalactites that blocked their progress, and descended into a world frozen in time—its main entrance blocked off by a massive rock slide 29,000 years ago.



Artists worked from 6,000 reference photographs and experimented with charcoal from various sources to re-create Chauvet's Paleolithic masterpieces, including the Gallery of Lions.

Brunel, the first to wedge through the passage, glimpsed surreal crystalline deposits that had built up for millennia, then stopped before a pair of blurry red lines drawn on the wall to her right. "They have been here," she shouted to her awe-struck companions.

The trio moved gingerly across the earthen floor, trying not to tread on the crystallized ashes from an ancient fire pit, gazing in wonder at hundreds of images. "We found ourselves in front of a rock wall covered entirely with red ocher drawings," the cavers re-

MAP: GUILBERT GATES



JEAN CLOTTES / MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE

membered in their brief memoir published last year. "The panel contained a mammoth with a long trunk, then a lion with red dots spattered around its snout in an arc, like drops of blood. We crouched on our heels, gazing at the cave wall, mute with stupefaction."

Spread out over six chambers spanning 1,300 feet were panels of lionesses in pursuit of great herbivores—including aurochs, the now-extinct ancestors of domestic cattle, and bison; engravings of owls and woolly rhinoceroses; a charcoal portrait of four wild horses captured in individualized profile, and some 400 other images of beasts that had roamed the plains and valleys in huge numbers during the ice age. With a skill never before seen in cave art, the artists had used the knobs, recesses and other irregularities of the limestone to impart a sense of dynamism and three-dimensionality to their galloping, leaping creatures. Later, Jean-Marie Chauvet would marvel at the "remarkable realism" and "aesthetic mastery" of the artworks they encountered that day.

Within months, Chauvet (the cave, officially Chauvet-Pont d'Arc, was named for its primary discoverer) would revolutionize our understanding of emerging human creativity. Radiocarbon dating conducted on 80 charcoal samples from the paintings determined that the majority of the works dated back 36,000 years—more than double the age of any comparable cave art yet uncovered. A second wave of Paleolithic artists, scientists would determine, entered the cave 5,000 years later and added dozens more paintings to the walls. Researchers were compelled to radically revise their estimates of the period when Homo sapiens first developed symbolic art and began to unleash the power of imagination. At the height of the Aurignacian period—between 40,000 and 28,000 years ago—when Homo sapiens shared the turf with the still-dominant Neanderthals, this artistic impulse may have signaled an evolutionary leap. While Homo sapiens were experimenting with perspective and creating proto-animation on the walls, their cousins, the Neanderthals, shuffling toward extinction, had

not moved beyond the production of crude rings and awls. The finding also demonstrated that Paleolithic artists had painted in a consistent style, using similar techniques for 25,000 years—a remarkable stability that is the sign, Gregory Curtis wrote in *The Cave Painters*, his major survey of prehistoric art, of "a classical civilization."

The Caverne du Pont d'Arc installation is the product of a bitter experience involving another irreplaceable treasure. The Lascaux Cave in the Dordogne region of southwestern France was, like Chauvet, discovered by serendipity: In September 1940, four teenage boys and their dog stumbled across it while searching for rumored buried treasure in the forest. The 650-foot-long subterranean complex contains 900 of the finest examples of prehistoric paintings and engravings ever seen, all dating back around 17,000 years. The cave's undoing came after the French Ministry of Culture opened it to the public in 1948: Visitors by the thousands rushed in, destroying the fragile atmospheric equilibrium. A green slime of bacteria, fungi and algae formed on the walls; white-crystal deposits coated the frescoes. In 1963 alarmed officials sealed the cave and limited entry to scientists and other experts. But an irreversible cycle of decay had begun. Spreading fungus lesions—which cannot be removed without causing further damage—now cover many of the paintings. Moisture has washed away pigments and turned the white calcite walls a dull gray. In 2010, when then French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, toured the site on the 70th anniversary of its discovery, Laurence Léauté-Beasley, president of a committee that campaigns for the cave's preservation, called the visit a "funeral service for Lascaux."

Immediately upon Chauvet's discovery—even before it was announced—French authorities installed a steel door at the entrance and imposed stringent access restrictions. In 2014, a total of 280 individuals—including scientists, specialists working on the simulation and conservators monitoring the cave—were allowed to enter, typically spending two hours in a single visit.

A few days after Christmas in 1994, Jean Clottes, a pre-eminent scholar of rock art and then an archaeology official in the French Ministry of Culture, received a call from a conservator, asking Clottes to rush to the Ardèche Gorge to verify a find. "I had my family coming; I asked whether I could do it after the New Year," Clottes recalls one day at his home in Foix, in the Pyrenees south of Toulouse. "He said, 'No, you've got to come right away. It looks like a big discovery. They say there are hundreds of images, lots of lions and rhinos.' I thought that is bizarre, because representations of lions and rhinos are not very frequent in caves."

Clottes arrived at the grotto and inched with great difficulty through the air shaft: "It was not horizontal. It sloped down, and then it turned, and then it sloped up. " As he approached the walls in the darkness, peering at the images through his headlamp, Clottes could sense immediately that the works were genuine. He stared, enthralled, at the hand-size red dots that covered one wall, a phenomenon he had never observed before. "Later we found out that they were done by putting wet paint inside the hand, and applying the hand against the wall," he says. "At the time, we didn't know how they were made." Clottes marveled at the verisimilitude of the wild horses, the vitality of the head-butting woolly rhinos, the masterful use of the limestone walls. "These were hidden masterpieces that nobody had laid eyes on for thousands and thousands of years, and I was the first specialist to see them," he says. "I had tears in my eyes."

Chabaud and his companions showed the chamber they discovered to Chauvet and asked him for recognition of their role in the find. Chauvet brushed them off, saying, "You were only our guests."

In 1996, two years after his first visit to Chauvet, Clottes published a seminal work, *The Shamans of Prehistory*, co-written with the eminent South African archaeologist David Lewis-Williams, that presented new ideas about the origins of cave art. The world of Paleolithic man existed on two planes, the authors hypothesized, a world of sense and touch, and a spirit world that lay beyond human consciousness. Rather than serving as dwellings for ancient man, Clottes and his colleague contended, caves such as Chauvet—dark, cold, forbidding places—functioned as gateways to a netherworld where spirits were thought to dwell. Elite members of Paleolithic societies —probably trained in the representational arts—entered these caves for ritualistic communion with the spirits, reaching out to them through their drawings. "You needed torches, grease lamps and pigment to go inside the caves. It was not for everyone. It was an expedition," Clottes told me.

As Clottes and his co-author interpreted it, the red-ocher handprints on the walls of Chauvet might well have represented attempts to summon the spirits out of the rock; the artists would likely have used the limestone wall's irregularities not only to animate the animal's features but also to locate their spirits' dwelling places. Enigmatic displays found inside Chauvet—a bear cranium placed on an altarlike pedestal, a phallic column upon which a woman's painted legs and vulva blend into a bison's head—lend weight to the theory that these places held transformative power and religious significance. Clottes imagined that these primeval artists connected to the spirit world in an altered state of consciousness, much like the hallucinogen-induced trances achieved by modern-day shamans in traditional societies in South America, west Asia, parts of Africa, and Australia. He perceived parallels between the images that shamans see when hallucinating—geometric patterns, religious imagery, wild animals



GREGORIE BERNARDI

Brunel, left, Hillaire and Chauvet assert they found the site. Another claimant, Michel Chabaud, says he should share credit: "My children and grandchildren must know what happened at the cave."

and monsters—and the images adorning Chauvet, Lascaux and other caves.

It was not surprising, says Clottes, that these early artists made the conscious choice to embellish their walls with wild animals, while almost entirely ignoring human beings. For Paleolithic man, animals dominated their environment, and served as sources of both sustenance and terror. "You must imagine the Ardèche Gorge of 30,000 years ago," Clottes, now 81, says in his home study, surrounded by Tuareg knives and saddlebags, Central African masks, Bolivian cloth puppets and other mementos from his travels in search of ancient rock art. "In those days you might have one family of 20 people living there, the next family 12 miles away. It was a world of very few people living in a world of animals." Clottes believes that prehistoric shamans invoked the spirits in their paintings not only to aid them on their hunts, but also for births, illnesses and other crises and rites of passage. "These animals were full of power, and the paintings are images of power," he says. "If you get in touch with the spirit, it is not out of idle curiosity. You do it because you need their help."

Clottes' original interpretation of Paleolithic art was at once embraced and ridiculed by fellow scholars. One dismissed it as "psychedelic ravings." Another titled his review of the Clottes-Lewis-Williams book, "Membrane and Numb Brain: A Close Look at a Recent Claim for Shamanism in Paleolithic Art." One colleague berated him for "encouraging the use of drugs" by writing lyrically about the trance-like states of the Paleo shamans. "We were accused of all sorts of things, even of immorality," Clottes tells me. "But altered states of consciousness are a fundamental part of us. It is a fact."

Clottes found a champion in the German director Werner Herzog, who made him the star of his documentary about Chauvet, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, and popularized Clottes' theories. "Will we ever be able to understand the vision of these artists across such an abyss of time?" Herzog asks, and Clottes, on camera, provides an answer. For the artists, "There [were] no barriers between the world where we are and the world of the spirits. A wall can talk to us, can accept us or refuse us," he said. "A shaman can send his or her spirit to the world of the supernatural or can receive the visit inside him of supernatural spirits. . . you realize how different life must have been for those people from the way we live now."

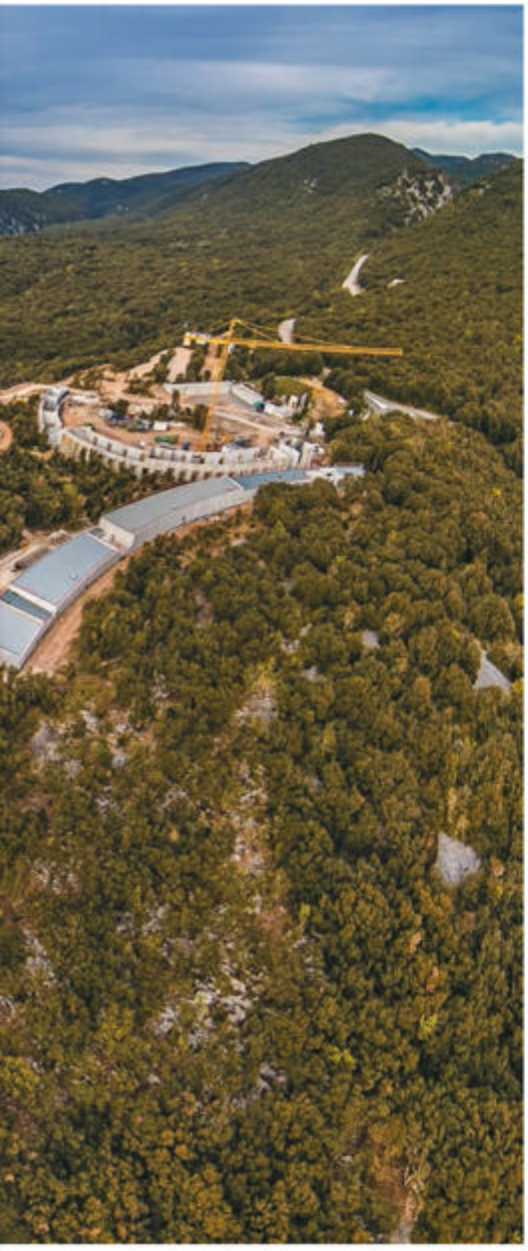
In the years since his theory of a prehistoric vision quest first stirred debate, Clottes has been challenged on other fronts. Archaeologists have insisted that the samples used to date the Chauvet paintings must have been contaminated, because no other artworks from that period have approached that level of sophistication. Declaring the paintings to be 32,000 years old was like claiming to have found "a Renaissance painting in a Roman villa," scoffed British archaeologist Paul Pettit, who insisted they were at least 10,000 years

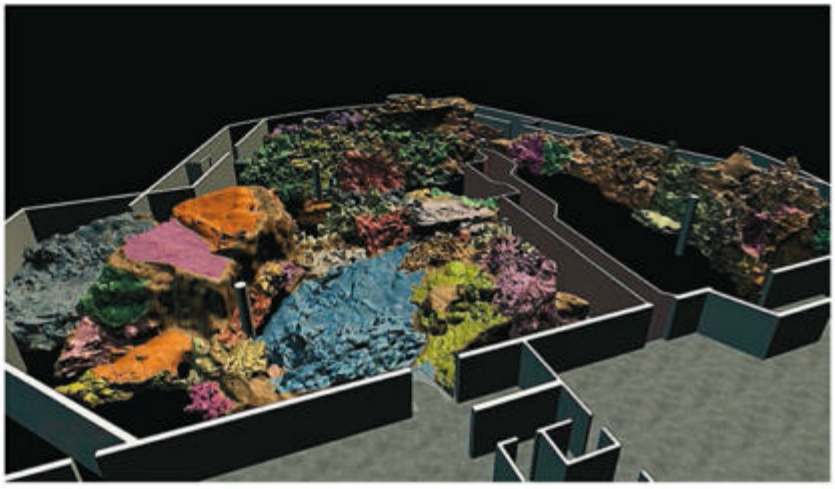


younger. The findings "polarized the archaeological world," said Andrew Lawson, another British archaeologist. But arguments for the accuracy of the dating got a boost four years ago, when Jean-Marc Elalouf at the Institute of Biology and Technology in Saclay, France, conducted DNA studies and radiocarbon dating of the remains of cave bears (*Ursus spelaeus*) that ventured inside the grotto to hibernate during the long ice age winters. Elalouf determined that the cave bear skeletal remains were between 37,000 and 29,000 years old. Humans and bears entered the cave on a regular basis—though never together—before the rock fall. "Then, 29,000 years ago, after the rock slide, they couldn't get inside anymore," says Clottes.

Paleontologists (who study animal remains inside the cave, mainly of bears but also wolves, ibexes and other mammals), geologists (who examine how the cave evolved and what this can tell us about prehistoric people's actions inside it), art historians (who study the painted and engraved walls in all their detail) and other specialists visit Chauvet on a regular basis, adding to our understanding of the site. They have mapped every square inch with advanced 3-D technology, counted the bones of 190 cave bears and inventoried the 425 animal images, identifying nine species of carnivores and five species of ungulates. They have documented the pigments used—including charcoal and unhydrated hematite, a natural earth pigment otherwise known as red ocher. They have uncovered and identified the tools the cave artists employed, including brushes made from horse hair, swabs, flint points and lumps of iron oxides dug out of the ground that could be molded into a kind of hand-held, Paleolithic crayon. They have used geological

STÉPHANE COMPOINT / RESOLUTE





The complex (left, with the flat-roofed replica structure, far left) sprawls over 40 acres. Eighty scanned sections of the real cave were combined to produce the facsimile (above, a digital rendering).

GUY PERAZIO / SYCPA

analysis and a laser-based remote sensing technology to visualize the collapse of limestone slabs that sealed access to Chauvet Cave until its 1994 rediscovery.

One recent study, co-directed by Clottes, analyzed the faint traces left by human fingers on a decorated panel in the End Chamber. The fingers were pressed against the wall and moved vertically or horizontally against the soft limestone before the painter drew images of a lion, rhinoceros, bison and bear. Clottes and his co-researcher, Marc Azéma, theorize that the tracing was a shamanistic ritual intended to establish a link between the artist and the supernatural powers inside the rock. Prehistorian Norbert Aujoulat studied a single painting, *Panel of the Panther*, identified the tools used to create the masterwork and found other images throughout the cave that were produced employing the same techniques. Archaeologists Dominique Baffier and Valérie Feruglio have focused their research on the large red dots on the Chauvet walls, and determined that they were made by two individuals—a male who stood about 5-foot-9 and a female or adolescent—who coated their hands with red ocher and pressed their palms against the limestone.

Jean-Michel Geneste, Clottes' successor as scientific director of Chauvet, leads two 40-person teams of experts into the grotto each year—in March and October—for 60 hours of research over 12 days. Geneste co-authored a 2014 study that analyzed a mysterious assemblage of limestone blocks and stalagmites in a side alcove. His team concluded that Paleolithic men had arranged some of the blocks, perhaps in the process of opening a conduit to paintings in other chambers, perhaps for deeper symbolic reasons. Geneste has also paid special attention to depictions of lions, symbols of power accorded a higher status than other mammals. "Some of the lion paintings are very anthropomorphic," he observes, "with a nose and human profile showing an empathy between the artists and these carnivores. They are painted completely differently from other animals in Chauvet."

When I arrived at the Caverne du Pont d'Arc for a preview that rainy morning this past December, I was skeptical. The installation's concrete enclosure was something of an eyesore in an otherwise pristine landscape—like a football stadium plunked down at Walden Pond. I feared that a facsimile would reduce the miracle of Chauvet to a Disneyland or Madame Tussaud-style theme park—a tawdry, commercialized experience. But my hopes began to rise as we followed a winding pathway flanked by pines, offering vistas of forested hills at every turn. At the entrance to the recreated cave, a dark passage, the air was moist and cool—the temperature maintained at 53.5 degrees, just as in Chauvet. The rough, sloping rock faces, streaked with orange mineral deposits, and multispired stalactites hanging from the ceiling, felt startlingly authentic, as did the reproduced bear skulls, femurs and teeth littering the earthen floors. The paintings were copied using the austere palette of Paoleolithic artists, traced on surfaces that reproduced, bump for bump, groove for groove, the limestone canvas used by ancient painters.

The exactitude owed much to the participation of some of the most preemi-

nent prehistoric cave experts in France, including Clottes and Geneste. The team painstakingly mapped every square inch of the real Chauvet by using 3-D models, then shrinking the projected surface area from 8,000 to 3,000 square meters. Architects suspended a frame of welded metal rods—shaped to digital coordinates provided by the 3-D model—from the roof of the concrete shell. They layered mortar over the metal cage to re-create the limestone inside Chauvet. Artists then applied pigments with brushes, mimicking the earth tones of the cave walls, based on studies conducted by geomorphologists at the University of Savoie in Chambery. Artists working in plastics created crystal formations and animal bones. Twenty-seven panels were painted on synthetic resin in studios in both Montignac, in the Dordogne; and in Toulouse. "We wanted the experience to resemble as closely as possible the feeling of entering the grotto," artist Alain Dalis told me.

Twenty years to the day that Chauvet and his two companions first edged their way into the cave, Paulo Rodrigues and Charles Chauveau, conservators overseeing the site, are climbing a path beyond a vineyard through a forest of pine and chestnut toward the base of a limestone cliff perforated with grottoes. It's a cold, misty morning in December, and wisps of fog drift over the neat rows of vines and the Ardèche River far below. The Pont d'Arc, the limestone arch that spans the river, lies obscured behind the trees. During the Aurignacian period, Rodrigues tells me, the vegetation was much sparser here, and the Pont d'Arc would have been visible from the rock ledge that we're now walking on; from this angle the formation bears a striking resemblance to a mammoth. Many experts believe that early artists deliberately selected the Chauvet cave for their vision quests because of its proximity to the limestone monolith.

As I followed the conservators, I was retracing not only the route to the cave, but also events that have led to a bruising debate about who should have bragging rights to the cave's discovery. The story begins on this footpath, in the spring of 1994, when a veteran spelunker and friend of Jean-Marie Chauvet, Michel Rosa, known to friends as Baba, initially detected air seeping from a small chamber blocked by stones. According to close friends of both men, it was Baba who suggested the airflow was coming from a cave hidden behind the rocks. Baba, they said, tried to climb into the hole, only to give up after reaching a stalactite he couldn't move by hand. The aperture became known among spelunkers as *Le Trou de Baba*, or Baba's Hole.

Chauvet has maintained that Rosa—a reclusive figure who has rarely spoken publicly about the case—lost interest in the site and moved on to explore other caves. Others insist that Baba had always planned to come back—and that Chauvet had cheated him out of the chance by returning, unannounced, with Eliette Brunel





Artists reproduced Paleo tools such as burnt-pine brushes to create 27 panels of images (above, a rhino). They used plastics for bear skeletons (left).

six months later. Chauvet violated a caver's code of honor, says Michel Chabaud, formerly one of his closest friends. "On the level of morality," he says, "Chauvet did not behave well." Baba vanished into obscurity and Chauvet's name was attached to one of the world's greatest cultural treasures.

After following the path along the cliff, the conservators and I stop before a grotto used to store equipment and monitor the atmosphere inside Chauvet. "We are doing all we can to limit the human presence, so as not to alter this equilibrium," says Chauveau, showing me a console with removable air-sample tubes that measure the level of radon, a colorless, odorless radioactive gas released from decaying uranium-ore deposits inside caves. "The goal is to keep the cave in the exact condition that it was found in 1994," he adds. "We don't want another Lascaux on our hands." The two conservators make their way here weekly, checking for intruders, making certain that air filters and other equipment are running smoothly.

Afterward, we follow a wooden walkway, constructed in 1999, that leads to the Chauvet entrance. Rodrigues points to a massive slab of limestone, covered in moss, orange mineral deposits and weeds—"all of that rock slid down, and covered the original entrance."

At last we arrive at a set of wooden steps and climb to the four-foot-high steel door that seals off the aperture. It is as far as I am permitted to go: The Culture Ministry bars anyone from entering the cave during the damp and cold Provençal winter, when carbon dioxide levels inside the grotto reach 4 percent of the total atmosphere, twice as high as the amount considered to be safe to breathe.

It was just a few dozen yards from this spot that another drama played out on the night of December 24, 1994—a story that has re-emerged in the public eye and renewed old grievances. At Chauvet's invitation, Michel Chabaud and two other spelunkers, all close friends and occasional visitors to the Trou de Baba, entered the cave to share with the original three their exhilaration at the discovery. Six days after their find, Chauvet, Brunel and Hillaire had not yet explored every chamber. Chabaud and his two friends pushed into the darkness—and became the first humans in 30,000 years to penetrate the Gallery of the Lions, the End Chamber, where the finest drawings were found. "We saw paintings everywhere, and we went deeper and deeper," Chabaud wrote in his diary that evening. "We were in a state of incredible excitement Everyone was saying, 'incredible, this is the new Lascaux.'" Chabaud and his companions showed the chamber they discovered to Chauvet, he says, and asked for recognition of their role in the find. Chauvet brushed them off, saying dismissively, "You were only our guests."

I caught up with the three original discoverers—or *inventeurs*, as the

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French often call them—a few days before this past Christmas in St. Remèze, a village of winding alleys and red-tile-roofed houses deep in the forests of the Ardèche Gorge. All had gathered in the courtyard of the Town Hall for the 20th anniversary celebration of their find. It had been a difficult week for them. The national press had picked up on the revived quarrel over the cave's discovery. A headline in the French edition of *Vanity Fair* declared, "The Chauvet Cave and Its Broken Dreams." New allegations were being aired, including a charge that one of the three discoverers, Christian Hillaire, had not even been at the cave that day.

The fracas was playing out against protracted haggling between the trio and the Caverne du Pont d'Arc's financial backers. At stake was the division of profits from the sale of tickets and merchandise, a deal said to be worth millions. Chauvet and his companions had received $168,000 apiece from the French government as a reward for their discovery, and some officials felt the three did not deserve anything more. "They are just being greedy," one official told me. (The Lascaux discoverers had never received a penny.) With negotiations stalled, the project's backers had stripped the name "Chauvet" from the Caverne du Pont d'Arc facsimile—it was supposed to have been called the Caverne Chauvet-Pont d'Arc—and withdrawn invitations for the three to the opening. The dispute was playing into the hands of the inventeurs' opponents. Pascal Terrasse of the Pont d'Arc project announced he was suspending talks with the trio because, he told *Le Point* newspaper, "I can't negotiate with the people who aren't the real discoverers."

Christian Hillaire, stocky and rumpled, told me after weeks of what he deemed lies drummed up by a "cabal organized against us," they could no longer remain silent. "We have always avoided making claims, even when we're attacked," said Eliette Brunel, a bespectacled, elegant and fit-looking woman, as we strolled down an alley in St. Remèze, her hometown, which

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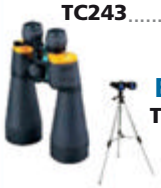
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was dead quiet in the wintry off-season. "But now, morally, we cannot accept what is happening." Chauvet, a compact man with a shock of gray hair, said that the falling out with his former best friends still pained him, but he had no regrets for the way he had acted. "The visit [to the Chauvet Cave] on December 24th was a great convivial moment," he said. "Everything that happened afterward was a pity. But we were there first, on the 18th of December. That can't be forgotten. It's sad that [our former friends] can no longer share this satisfying moment with us, but that was their choice."

We walked together back to the Town Hall, where the celebrations had commenced. Volunteers in Santa hats served mulled wine to 50 neighbors and admirers of the cave explorers, who signed copies of a new book and posed for photos. "We're among friends now," Brunel told me. As the light faded and the temperature dropped, Chauvet addressed the gathering in the courtyard. He referred mockingly to the fact that he hadn't been invited to the opening of the facsimile ("I'll have to pay €8 like everyone else") but insisted that he wasn't going to be dragged into the controversy. "The important thing is that what we discovered inside that cave belongs to all of humanity, to our children," he said, to applause, "and as for the rest of it, come what may."

Indeed, all of the squabbling seemed to pale into insignificance as I stood in the End Chamber at the Caverne du Pont d'Arc, gazing through the murk. I studied one monumental panel, 36 feet long, drawn in charcoal. Sixteen lions on the far right sprang in pursuit of a panicking herd of buffalo. To the left, a pack of woolly rhinos thundered across the tableau. The six curving horns of one beast conveyed rapid movement—what Herzog had described as "a form of proto cinema." A single rhino had turned to face the stampeding herd. I marveled at the artist's interplay of perspective and action, half-expecting the menagerie to launch itself from the rock. I thought: *They have been here.*

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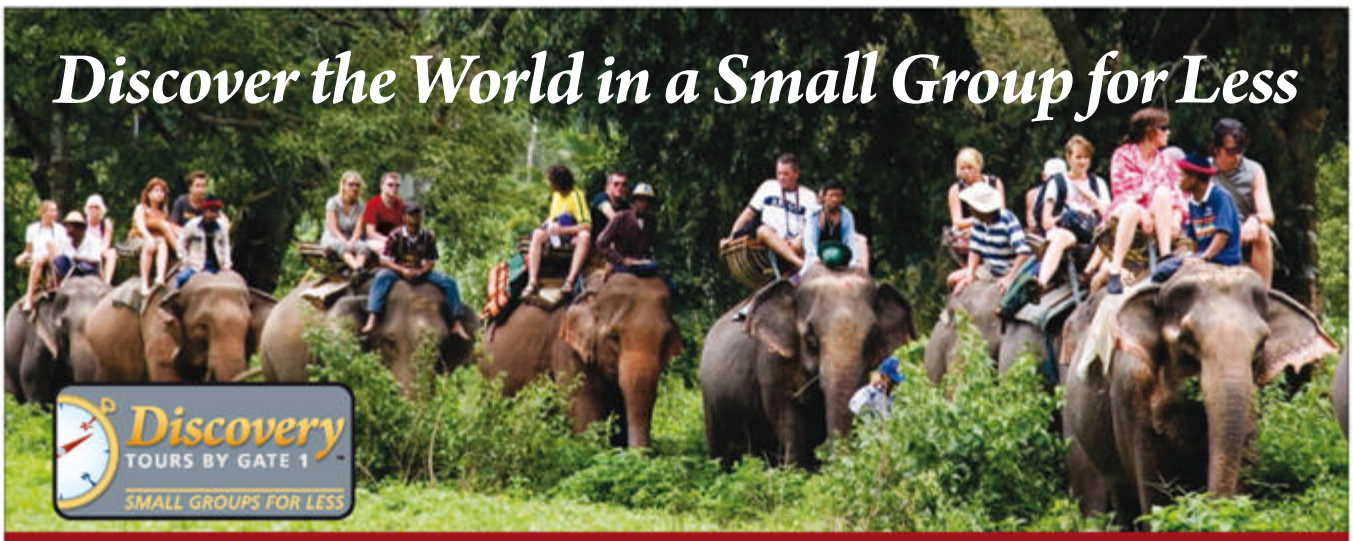
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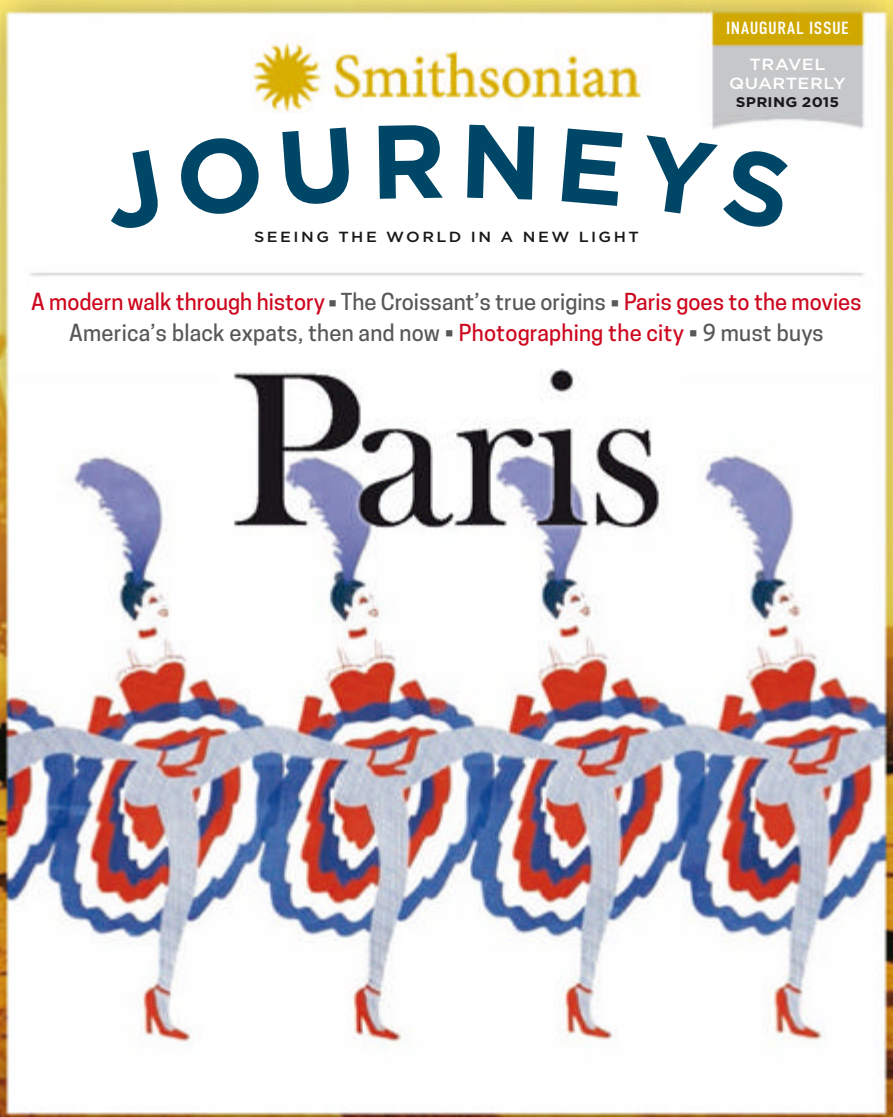
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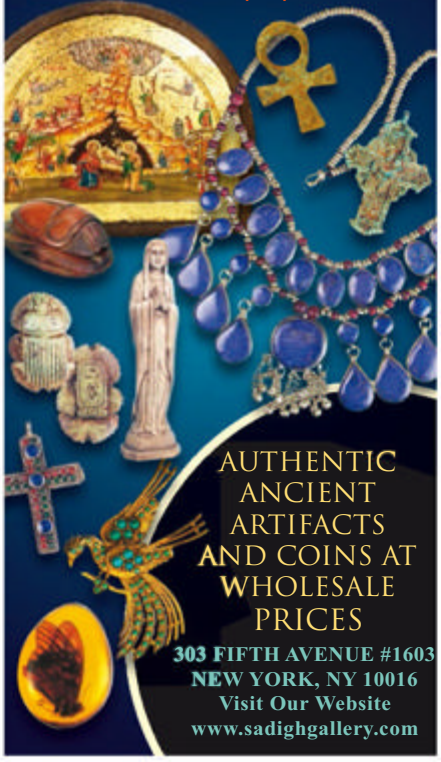


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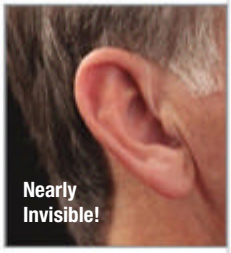
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Lafayette

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

quotes a French comrade who tries to convince Lafayette to stop being such a sap by believing Americans "are unified by the love of virtue, of liberty . . . that they are simple, good hospitable people who prefer beneficence to all our vain pleasures." But that is what he believed, and nothing could convince him otherwise. Lafayette's American bubble remained unburst to the end.

It must be said that battlefield heroics contribute little to Lafayette's legacy, even though he sought to win glory through force of arms at every opportunity. Whether by circumstance or design—Chatel de Brancion says some of both—Lafayette was rarely put in a position to risk serious harm. Lafayette's physical courage was beyond question, but his ardor often outweighed his military judgment.

Moreover, as Franklin counseled, it was prudent to protect such a valuable political chess piece. No one wanted Lafayette to meet the fate of his friend de Kalb (DeKalb Avenue, Brooklyn). He was shot and bayoneted repeatedly at the Battle of Camden, dying of his wounds three days later.

Lafayette's brush with death came at the disastrous Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, when a musket ball passed through the fleshy part of his lower leg. In this, as in so many things, Lafayette had luck on his side. The wound did him little harm (he was treated by Washington's personal physician) and made him an instant hero.

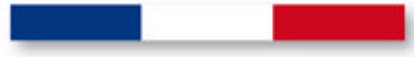
Another exploit burnished Lafayette's reputation as a fighting man. On May 20, 1778, Lafayette and his small detachment of Pennsylvania militiamen, at their camp outside Philadelphia, found that they were surrounded by 5,000 redcoats advancing from several directions. Lafayette's coolness in organizing a retreat in which only nine of his men were killed is nothing short of "miraculous," writes Auricchio.

In January 1779, with a lull in the fighting, Lafayette sailed back to France, where he continued to knock himself out seeking crucial additional assistance on America's behalf. ("It is fortunate for the king that Lafayette does not take it into his head to strip Versailles of its furniture, to send to his dear Americans," the Count de Maurepas remarked in the royal council.)

What Lafayette wanted above all was to return to America in a French uniform at the head of the French expeditionary force forming in early 1780. Instead, the job was given to the battle-hardened Count de Rochambeau. Lafayette's mission to Washington aboard the *Hermione* was given to him as a consolation prize.

Capt. Yann Cariou finally found the rough weather he was looking for. Two days after setting out from La Rochelle, he moored the *Hermione* in a bay off the Crozon peninsula near the northwestern tip of France, almost within sight of where he was born on the Pointe du Raz. These are notoriously angry waters, and they lived up to their billing. All hands welcomed the foul, blustery morning that greeted us the following day.

> "My love, my reception here is greater than anything that I could describe to you."



We sailed out of the bay under a sharp breeze, the *Hermione* skimming along at ten knots and Mozart's Symphony No. 25 in G minor cranking on the PA. Everybody was elated. The volunteer crew of men and women mainly in their 20s—French, Swedish, Belgian, German and one American—strained to hoist more sail, eight or ten of them on each line (there were no winches in 1779; the Swedish bosun noted that if a time machine sent him back to the original *Hermione*, he would make sure to bring a portable winch with him). As instructed, everybody grunted, "*Oh! hisse*!" in cadence as they pulled. It's French for "heave ho," pronounced *oh eese*; the bosun tells me that you get demonstrably better pulling power if you sing out while you pull.

Before long the wind picked up to Force 8, a gale. The *Hermione* was slicing through the high swells at 12 or so knots, very fast and close to its top speed. Captain Cariou was smiling broadly as the swells knocked the ship from side to side.

"I'm astonished at what she can do," says Cariou shaking his head appreciatively. Before he took over as the *Hermione*'s skipper in 2012, Cariou served as captain of the 167-foot *Belem*, the French merchant marine's three-masted training barque. The sluggish *Belem* was built in 1896 to haul sugar from the West Indies back to France. Cariou was amazed by the difference. "The hull is perfect! She pushes very little water ahead of her, and she chews up very little wake behind."

The swells had picked up now, and the wind was whistling through the rigging. Some 60 feet up, the crew in yellow slickers was working fast to reef the mainsail while balancing shakily on a slender rope. Looking up I feared for them all, but particularly for the lone American, Adam Hodges-LeClaire from Lincoln, Massachusetts. Adam is a college student obsessed with Revolutionary War history to the point that he sews his own period clothes. He wore nothing else on board, including skimpy leather shoes loosely tied with cord—not the best for keeping a foothold on a madly swaying line. "Please don't say I'm crazy," Adam asks me politely. "Say I'm . . . passionate."

Several sailors got seasick. "If you can't handle this, you're in the wrong business," says Charlène Gicquel, the pint-size first mate from the English Channel port of Cancale who came

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over with Cariou from the *Belem*. "But then," she adds, "we're all masochists."

This was the same kind of weather that the *Hermione* ran into near the beginning of its 38-day journey across the Atlantic in 1780. The ship's captain, Louis-René-Madeleine Le Vassor, Comte de Latouche-Tréville, noted the worsening conditions in his log. March 26: "*Hermione* pitching violently." March 30: "Wind turns to northwest with strong swells. I note with concern that the ship is straining."

Poor Lafayette. He was an unhappy sailor even in a calm sea—"I believe we sadden each other, [the sea] and I," he wrote during his first trip over. Rough water made him violently ill. Laurence Chatel de Brancion envisions Lafayette most likely on deck during the gale, hugging the *Hermione*'s main mast. That's what the German charlatan Franz Anton Mesmer recommended as a cure for seasickness. Lafayette was mesmerized—that's where we get the word—by Mesmer's crackpot theory of animal magnetism (in fairness, so was half of Europe). Even after Mesmer's claims had been thoroughly debunked (by Benjamin Franklin, among others) Lafayette may never have stopped believing. "When it came to matters scientific, Lafayette's enthusiasm sometimes trumped his good sense," Auricchio writes with some delicacy.

The destinies of Lafayette and the *Hermione* diverged after Lafayette debarked in Boston on April 28, 1780; he then traveled overland to join Washington at his headquarters in Morristown, New Jersey. The *Hermione*'s 34-year-old Capt. Latouche-Tréville sailed off to win great renown of his own against the English.

Little more than a month after dropping off Lafayette, Latouche-Tréville sighted the 32-gun English frigate *Iris* off Long Island. The two warships pounded each other at murderously close range for an hour and a half. Finally, the *Iris* withdrew, apparently in no shape to continue. The *Hermione* was badly damaged, and counted 10 dead and 37 wounded. The two captains subsequently argued in the press about who had actually won. But for the current *Hermione*'s captain, Yann Cariou, the question doesn't even arise: "We won," he tells me with a look that made me drop any follow-up questions.

Latouche-Tréville continued to reel off naval victories, often against great odds, in the *Hermione* and in other ships, during the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. On two occasions in 1801, he bloodied the nose of the invincible Lord Nelson. He was supposed to command at Trafalgar, but, alas for France, he died the year before the battle. "If we had had him at Trafalgar, everything would have been different," insists Cariou, sounding like a die-hard Brooklyn Dodgers fan replaying some of the World Series they lost to the Yankees before 1955.

Lafayette, for his part, wrote to his wife shortly after debarking the *Hermione* in Massachusetts. "It is to the roar of cannon that I arrive or depart; the principal residents mount their horses to accompany me," Lafayette reported. "In short, my love, my reception here is greater than anything that I could describe to you." Did all this adulation go to his head? Yes, it did. An exasperated John Adams, no great fan, wrote in his diary that Lafayette "would be thought the *unum necessarium* in everything."

Upon joining Washington in Morristown, Lafayette began agitating for a joint invasion of New York, where the British were strongly entrenched. Rochambeau had to slap him down, more than once. "He forgets that there is still a left flank in a landing, which the whole English Navy will exterminate," he wrote to another officer.

Rochambeau, along with Washington and the Count de Grasse, commander of the French fleet, opted for bottling up Cornwallis in Yorktown, allowing France to deploy the weight of both its army and its navy in support of Washington's Continental Army. The outcome speaks for itself. Yorktown briefly reunited Lafayette and the *Hermione* for the last time: He led 1,200 light infantry to keep Cornwallis busy in Virginia while the French tightened the noose around Yorktown from the sea; the *Hermione* was part of that noose. The way Laurence Chatel de Brancion sees it, Rochambeau never really got the credit he was due.

History dies hard. "The French still think the Americans should be grateful, because without us, they would never have won the war, which is true," says Bruno Gravellier, a former naval officer who is the superintendent aboard the *Hermione*. "It was a long time ago, but I still get a sense of friction between the U.S. and the French sides of the association."

The remainder of Lafayette's long life—he died in 1834 at age 76—belongs to the history of France. He unfailingly demonstrated a willingness to rise above the factionalism that gripped France as it headed toward its own revolution.

It sounds good and helps make Lafayette an emotionally sympathetic character, seen from here. But, like many of Lafayette's best qualities, it earned him little credit in his native land. An aristocratic liberal in the late 1700s and early 1800s was like a Rockefeller Republican today—a chimerical creature unbeloved by those whose dif-

The American Journey of *l'Hermione*

The ship's June/July itinerary highlights ports that were significant during the Revolution.



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ferences he tries to split. Even Thomas Jefferson, in 1789, warned Lafayette against attempting to "trim between two sides," but Lafayette didn't listen.

When thinking of Lafayette, Americans will always see the fiery youth at Washington's side, doing his damnedest for our country. Everything else is commentary, and maybe that's a fair way for an American to look at him.

In the turbulent history of France after Lafayette's return from America—a period that saw the French Revolution, the rise and fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy—Lafayette, a son of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution, in public life or private, steadfastly articulated his devotion to one principle: the pursuit of liberty.

Yet the French retain a different image. On July 17, 1791, a large crowd demonstrated on the Champ de Mars in Paris. Lafayette, commander in chief of the new National Guard, brought his troops to maintain order. A thrown rock, a dragoon down, and suddenly the troops opened fire, killing perhaps 100. There were twists and turns to come, but the massacre did incalculable damage to Lafayette's reputation. "He was catastrophic," is Chatel de Brancion's unappealable verdict. Lafayette did remain in the French Army until 1792 and later held office as deputy to the National Convention after the fall of Napoleon in 1815.

As the *Hermione* at last enters the Gironde estuary, headed for Bordeaux at the end of a week of sea trials, we are suddenly surrounded by dozens of small motor craft and sailboats. The vessels weave in and out, their occupants waving, and blasting their air horns. It's heady stuff, and it inflated all our spirits.

This must have been something like what Lafayette witnessed as the *Hermione* sailed into Boston Harbor in 1780. He must have been fairly drunk on it, too, given what Jefferson called his "canine appetite for fame." But maybe he can be forgiven. In such a moment, you don't ask yourself what you've done to deserve such fanfare. You just smile broadly and think, All this? For me?

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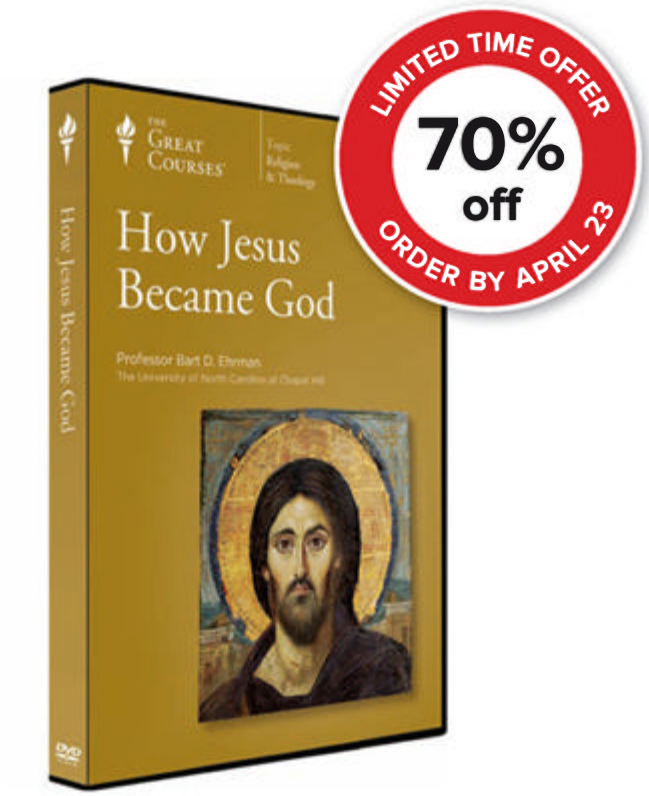
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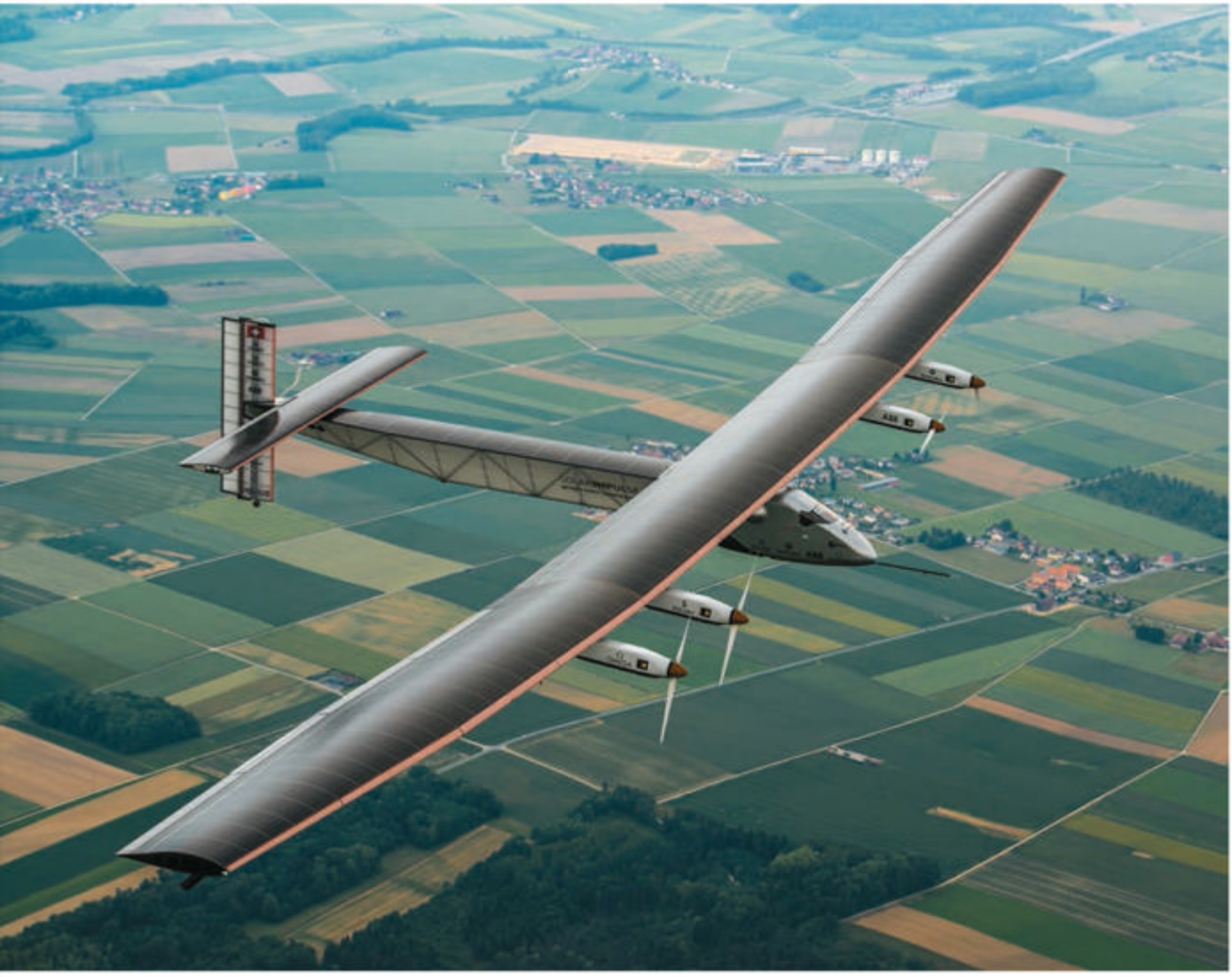
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